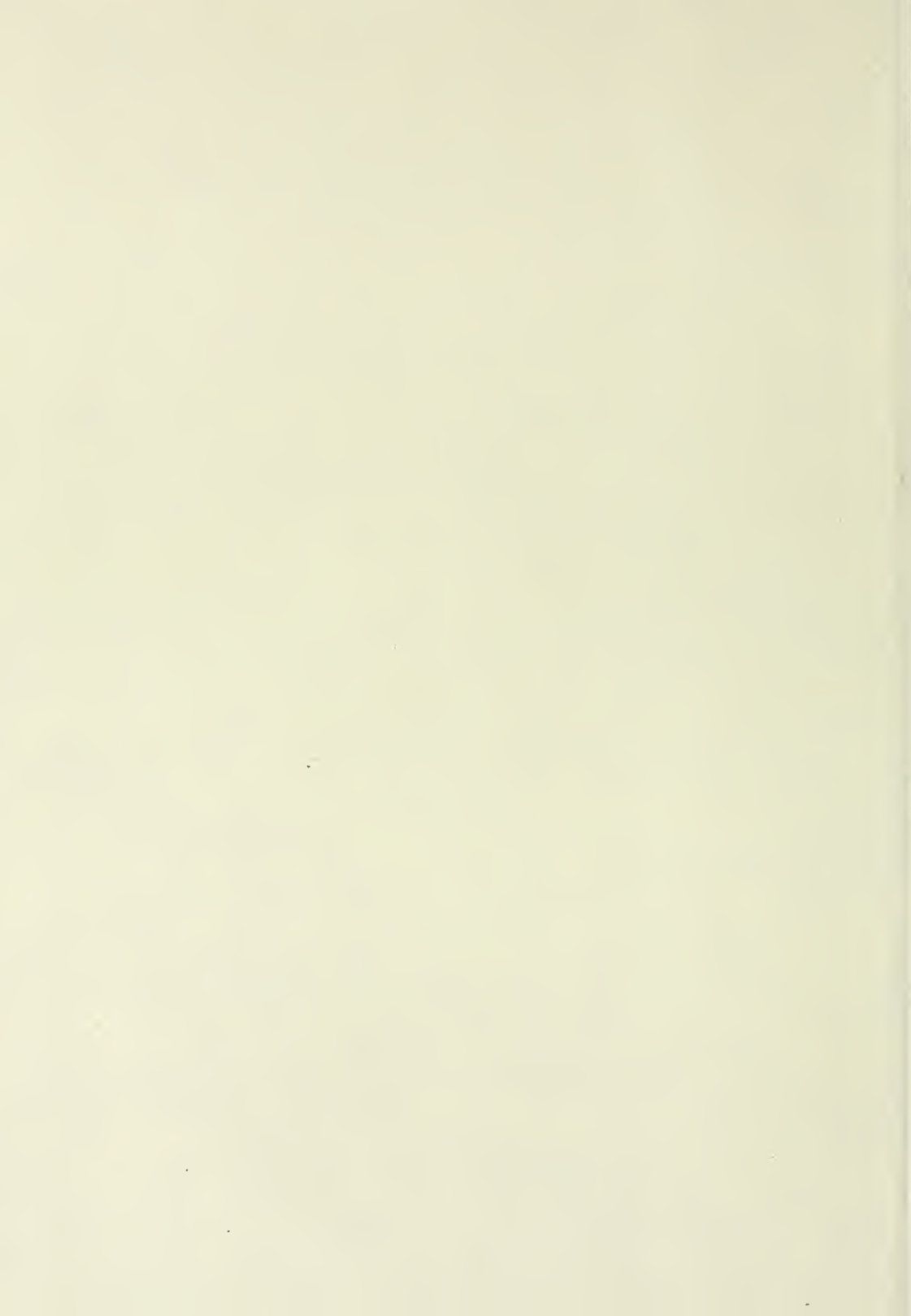


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BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
PAST AND PRESENT

WITH SOME REFLECTIONS ON THEIR
CHARACTERS AND CHARACTERISTICS

By
THORNTON D. APOLLONIO

I care not who makes a nation's laws,
Nor who writes its songs;
Just let me run its public schools.

WRIGHT & POTTER
BOSTON

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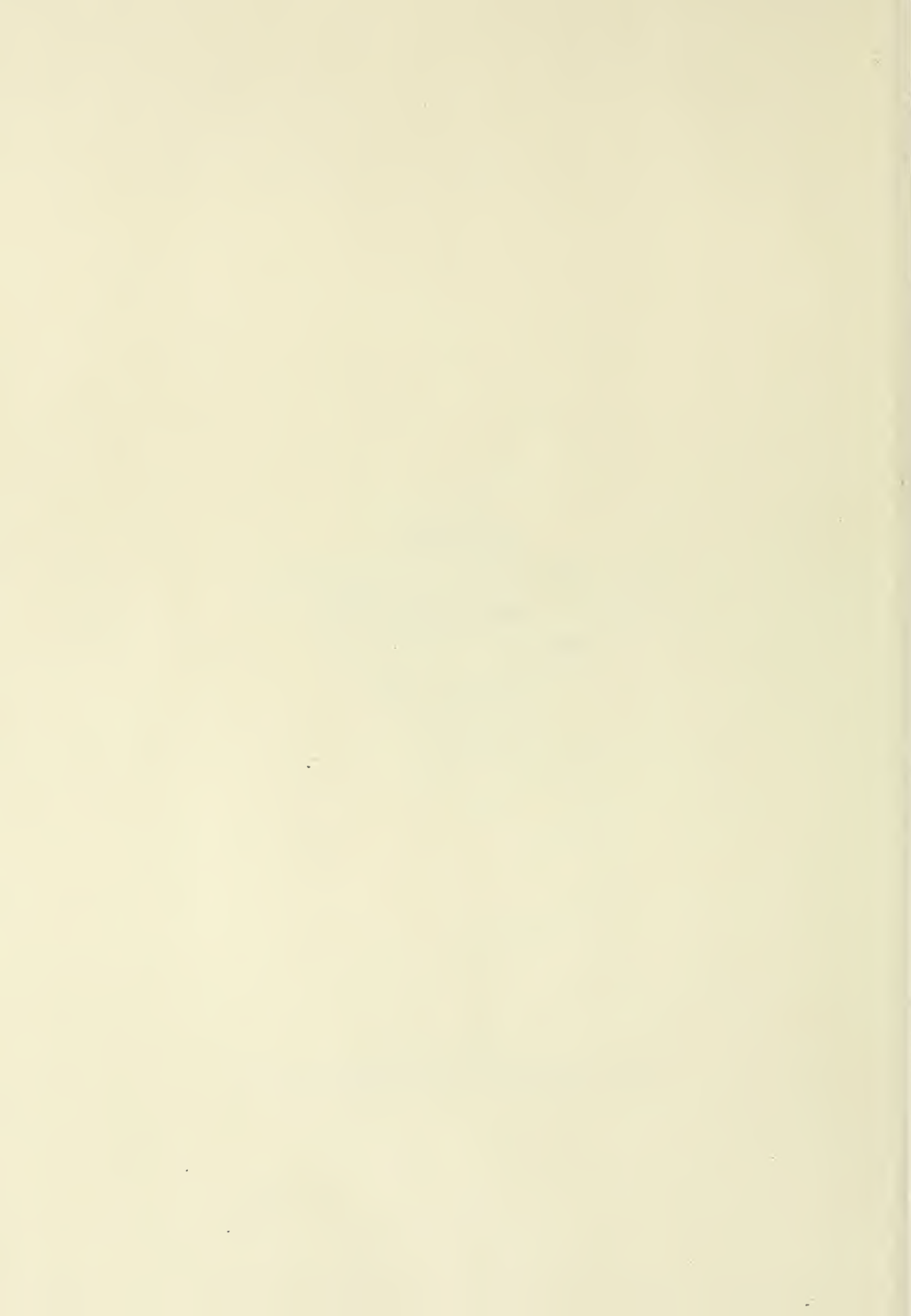
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Not (as yet) adopted as a text book in the Boston public schools

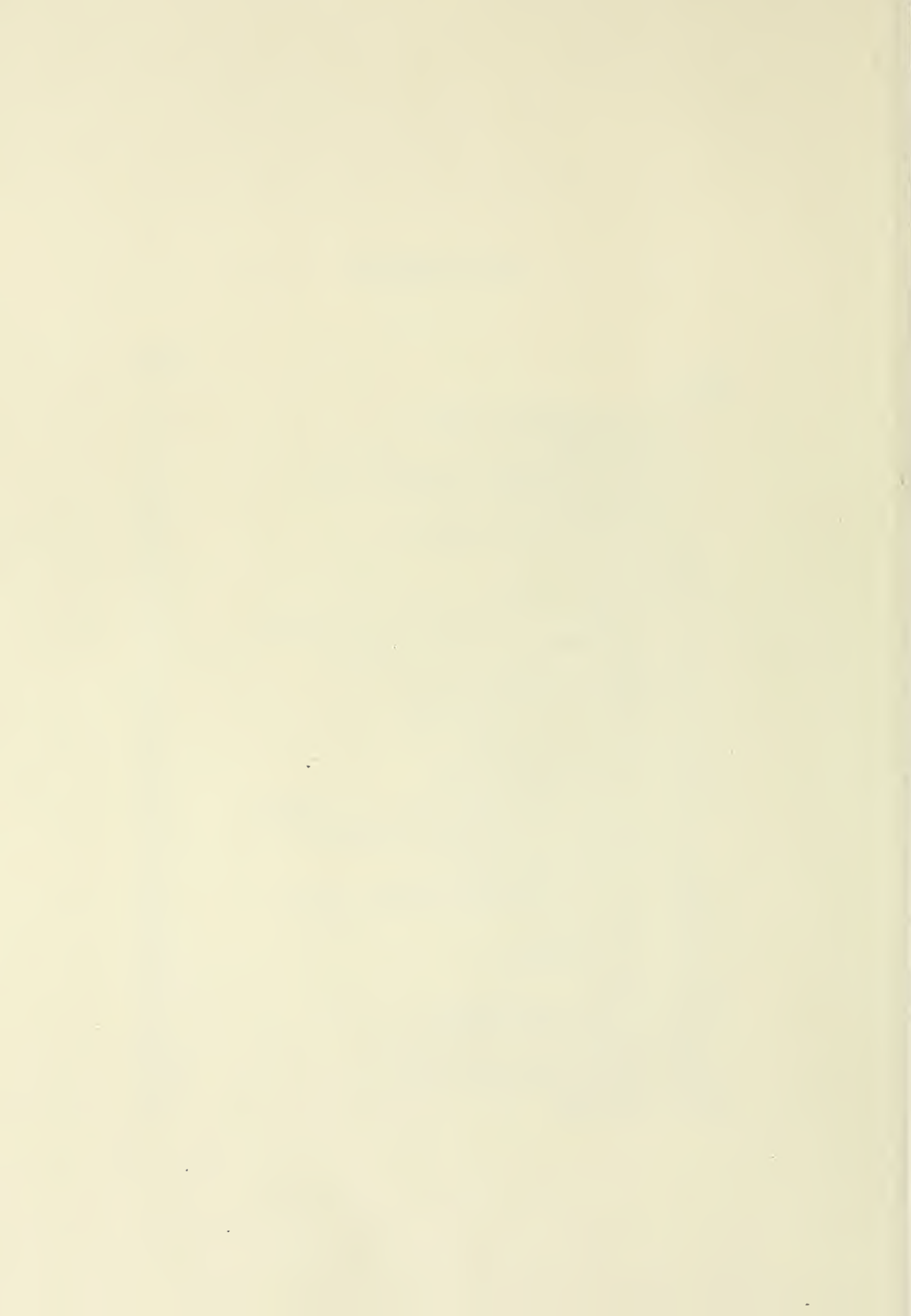
Dedication

THIS LITTLE BOOK IS DEDICATED TO THE
SACRED CAUSE OF EDUCATION —
LONG MAY IT WAVE—AND
TO ANY ONE WHO
MAY CHANCE TO
READ IT



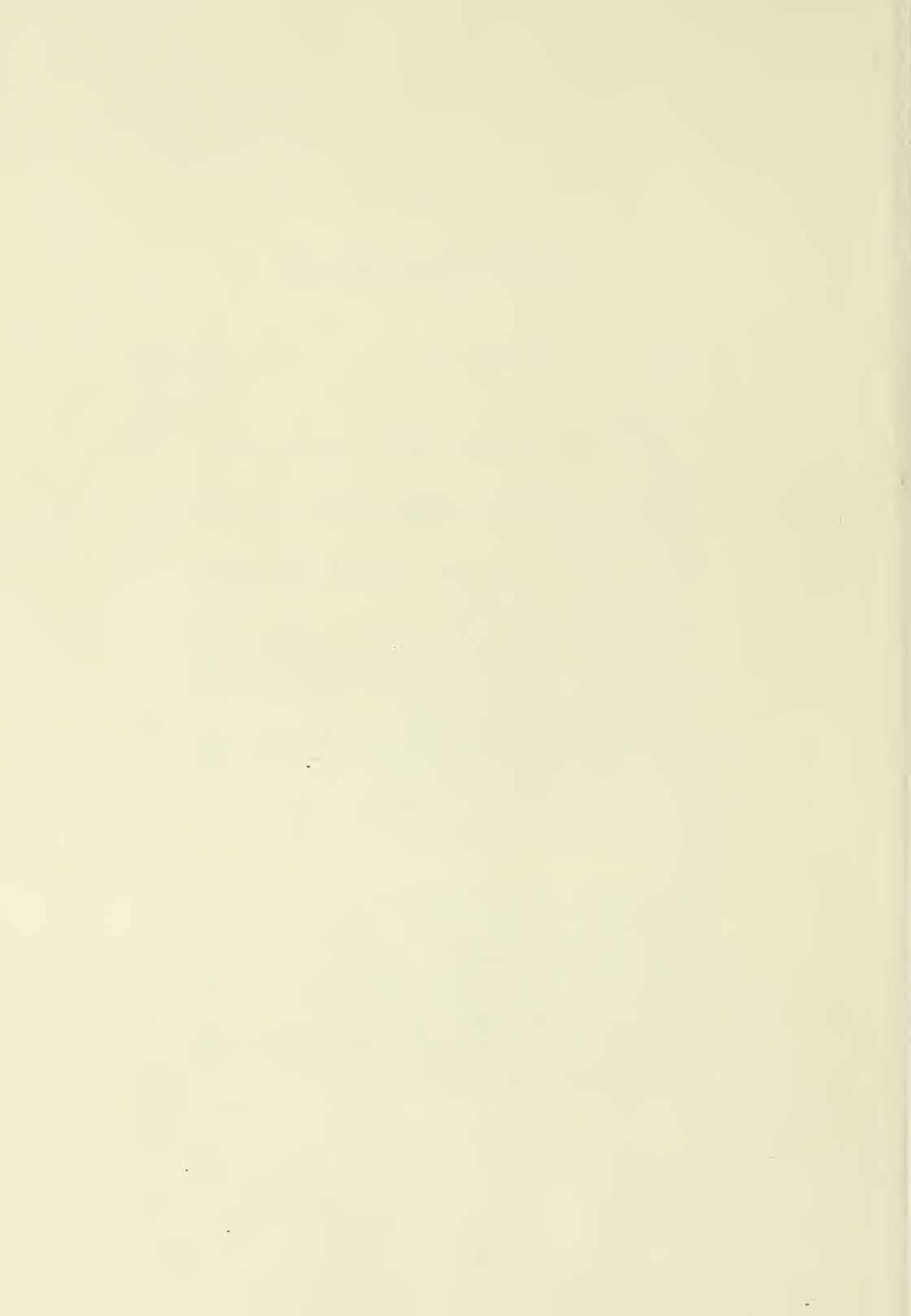
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PREFACE

Educators, especially in preparing courses of study, seem to prefer the word "Foreword." As many leaders in the teaching profession have a distinct preference for long rather than short words, perhaps the word "Introduction" might be better still.

Lord Timothy Dexter, late of Newburyport, once published a little book, the text of which contained no marks of punctuation. A considerable number of such marks, arranged in pleasing confusion, were printed on the last page of his volume. In explanation of this departure from accepted custom he stated that inasmuch as punctuation was not an exact science but rather depended upon individual taste, his readers might punctuate his book to suit themselves from the storehouse he so thoughtfully provided. Readers of this book should not hesitate to do likewise.

Text books in mathematics very often have appended a key to the problems the books contain. Readers of the following pages who may be in doubt as to the identity of the individuals referred

PREFACE

to therein (they are all real, none is imaginary), and who are unable easily to identify them to their own satisfaction — in other words, those who wish “the correct book of the opera” may obtain an official key by written application to the publishers accompanied by a suitable remittance — say not less than five dollars.

CHAPTER I

"IN THE BEGINNING"—GENESIS

IN 1635 "It was generally agreed upon that our brother Philemon Pormort shall be entreated to become schoolmaster for teaching and nurturing children among us." Brother Philemon seems to have been engaged merely to teach and nurture the children to read, and write, and cipher. Thus simply and modestly began the Boston school system. Thus the planting of the acorn.

The vast complexity of modern life, with its hurrying throng of events affecting our political, business and social life, so insistently presses upon us that before we are able to appreciate what they really mean and how ultimately they will affect us, their outlines are dimmed and blurred by other and later incidents that obscure those already received.

The successive changes that mark our progress through life come so gradually and so follow one another that we fail to appreciate their cumulative effect. We may wonder with a transient feeling of surprise how we ever got along without the tele-

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phone, wireless telegraphy,¹ the trolley, and the motor car; and tomorrow we are probably likely to regard as commonplace the device which brings to our ears in our own homes the voice of the President, and the music of an orchestra in a far-distant city. These changes, like human lives, individually transient and soon forgotten, yet in the aggregate bulk large when considered over a period of years.

It may be interesting, as well as instructive, to consider the growth and development of a city school system over the comparatively short space of twenty-five years and to show in contrast some of the changes that have taken place. In making this attempt little use will be made of figures which, however accurate and valuable they may be for statistical purposes, are incapable of being arranged in such a manner as to convey a picture readily understandable by the eye, or to form an easily comprehensible representation of the situation they are intended to convey. We shall try, therefore, to present what may be termed a bird's-eye-view of what has been accomplished in the school system during the last quarter of a century, not exhaustive and complete, but rather describing some of the more important changes that have taken place.

¹ At the Annual School Festival held in Boston Music Hall on July 25, 1865, Wendell Phillips addressing the graduates said: "We have invented a telegraph, but what of that? I expect, if I live forty years, to see a telegraph that will send messages without wire, both ways at the same time. If you do not invent it, you are not as good as we are. You are bound to go ahead of us."

PAST AND PRESENT

We shall not, however, entirely confine our footsteps to these limits, but shall occasionally make brief excursions into wider fields, not necessarily of usefulness, but rather that we may enjoy some strange and curious plants that now, alas, no longer grow in the modern school garden.

1898

1923

NORMAL, LATIN, AND DAY HIGH SCHOOLS

Normal and Rice Training School.	Normal School.
Public Latin School.	Public Latin School.
Girls' Latin School.	Girls' Latin School.
Brighton High School.	Brighton High School.
Charlestown High School.	Charlestown High School.
Dorchester High School.	Dorchester High School.
East Boston High School.	East Boston High School.
English High School.	English High School.
Girls' High School.	Girls' High School.
	High School of Commerce.
	High School of Practical Arts.
	Hyde Park High School.
Mechanic Arts High School.	Mechanic Arts High School.
Roxbury High School.	Roxbury High School.
	South Boston High School.
West Roxbury High School.	West Roxbury High School.

CLERICAL SCHOOL

| Boston Clerical School.

TRADE SCHOOLS

| Boston Trade School.
| Trade School for Girls.

CONTINUATION SCHOOL

| Boston Continuation School.

BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

HORACE MANN SCHOOL

Horace Mann School for the Deaf. | Horace Mann School for the Deaf.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

57 Grammar School Districts. | 16 Intermediate School Districts.
| 56 Elementary School Districts.

SPECIAL SCHOOLS AND DEPARTMENTS

Evening Schools

1 Master of Evening Drawing Schools.	1 Director.
4 Drawing Schools.	1 High School.
	8 Commercial High Schools.
	17 Elementary Schools, and 7 Branches.
	1 Trade School, and 4 Branches.

Extended Use of the Public Schools

1 Director.
10 School Centers.

Day School for Immigrants

50 Classes.

Day Practical Arts Classes

14 Classes.

Special Classes

1 Director.
1 Medical Inspector.
93 Classes.

Speech Improvement Classes

1 Assistant in Charge.
77 Classes.

PAST AND PRESENT

Classes for Conservation of Eyesight

|	1 Assistant in Charge.
|	8 Classes.

Boston Disciplinary Day School

|	3 Classes.
--	------------

Summer Review Schools and Summer Vacation School

|	1 Summer Review High School.
|	10 Summer Review Elementary Schools.
|	1 Summer Vacation School.

Educational Investigation and Measurement

|	1 Assistant Director.
|	1 Research Assistant.
|	1 Examiner in Penmanship.

Examinations

|	1 Chief Examiner.
--	-------------------

Household Science and Arts

1 Principal of Schools of Cookery.	| 1 Director.
	| 1 Assistant Director.
	| 1 Trade Assistant.
16 Teachers of Cookery.	| 42 Teachers of Cookery.
	| 1 Teacher of Millinery.
39 Teachers of Sewing.	| 69 Teachers of Sewing.
20 School Kitchens.	| 67 School Kitchens and Workrooms.
	| 3 Prevocational Centers for Girls.

Kindergartens

1 Director.	| 1 Director.
	| 1 Assistant Director.
63 Kindergartens.	| 165 Kindergartens.

Licensed Minors

|	1 Supervisor.
--	---------------

BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Manual Arts

1 Director of Drawing.	1 Director.
1 Principal of Manual Training Schools.	1 Associate Director.
	3 Assistant Directors.
	3 First Assistants.
	8 Assistants.
24 Assistant Instructors.	75 Teachers.
	83 Woodworking Shops.
	10 Prevocational Centers for Boys.
	Home and School Gardening:
	1 Normal School.
	3 High Schools.
	51 Elementary Schools.
	Summer Canning Activities:
	1 High School.
	5 Elementary Schools.
	2 Summer Recreational Handi-craft Centers.

Medical Inspection

1 Director.
48 School Physicians.
1 Supervising Nurse.
52 School Nurses.

Music

4 Instructors of Music.	1 Director.
4 Assistant Instructors of Music.	4 Assistant Directors.
	9 Assistants.

Penmanship

1 Director.

Physical Training

1 Assistant.	1 Director.
	2 Assistants.
	1 Supervisor in Charge of Play-grounds.
1 Instructor of Military Drill.	6 Instructors of Military Drill.
1 Armorer.	1 Armorer.

PAST AND PRESENT

Practice and Training

|	1 Director.
|	1 First Assistant Director.
|	4 Assistant Directors.

Primary Supervisors

|	2 Primary Supervisors.
--	------------------------

Salesmanship

|	1 Commercial Co-ordinator.
--	----------------------------

Vocational Guidance

|	1 Director.
|	3 Vocational Instructors.
|	6 Vocational Assistants.

Modern Languages

|	2 Assistants.
--	---------------

Attendance Officers

1 Chief Truant Officer.	|	1 Chief Attendance Officer.
18 Truant Officers.	|	28 Attendance Officers.

BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CHAPTER II

SCHOOL ROADS

THE first "Main Street" — the first road of the public school system — was short and direct. It led only "to the university" (Harvard College). The Public Latin School established in 1635, and until 1682 the only public school in the town of Boston, was founded solely to prepare boys for the university, in order that the colony might be aided in securing, says the historian, "a body of learned men, who 'by acquaintance with ancient tongues' should be able to obtain 'a knowledge of the Scriptures' and qualified 'to discover the true sense and meaning of the original.'" There were no lawyers in the colony at that early time, nor any physicians. The profession of medicine was practised, so far as it was practised at all, by the ministers of religion and by certain experienced women. The only apparent motive, therefore, a parent had in sending his son to the one public school in Boston was his desire to educate him for the ministry.

But, *deposuit potentes et exaltavit humiles*. Alas, for the church!

PAST AND PRESENT

Ill fares the land
To hastening ills a prey,
Where legal lights predominate
And clergymen decay.

The schools now turn out far more lawyers than clergymen. This is further proof that the world is growing worse rather than better.

The primitive schools, which later developed into the grammar schools, were first established in 1682, when the Latin School being much overcrowded, the town voted to set up two schools "for the teaching of children to write and cipher." Reading was learned at home or from private teachers.

These early schools admitted only boys. Girls were not admitted until 1789 when they were allowed to attend only half the year, from April to October. This was probably because many of the boys had work to do in the summer season and so left room in the schools for girls. It was not until 1828 that girls were admitted to the grammar schools on equal terms with the boys.

From time to time new roads were laid out through the school system, all leading in various directions but having a definite purpose and objective. Some carry traffic only during the daylight period, and during the regular school term. There are others maintained solely for evening travel, and still others are open only during

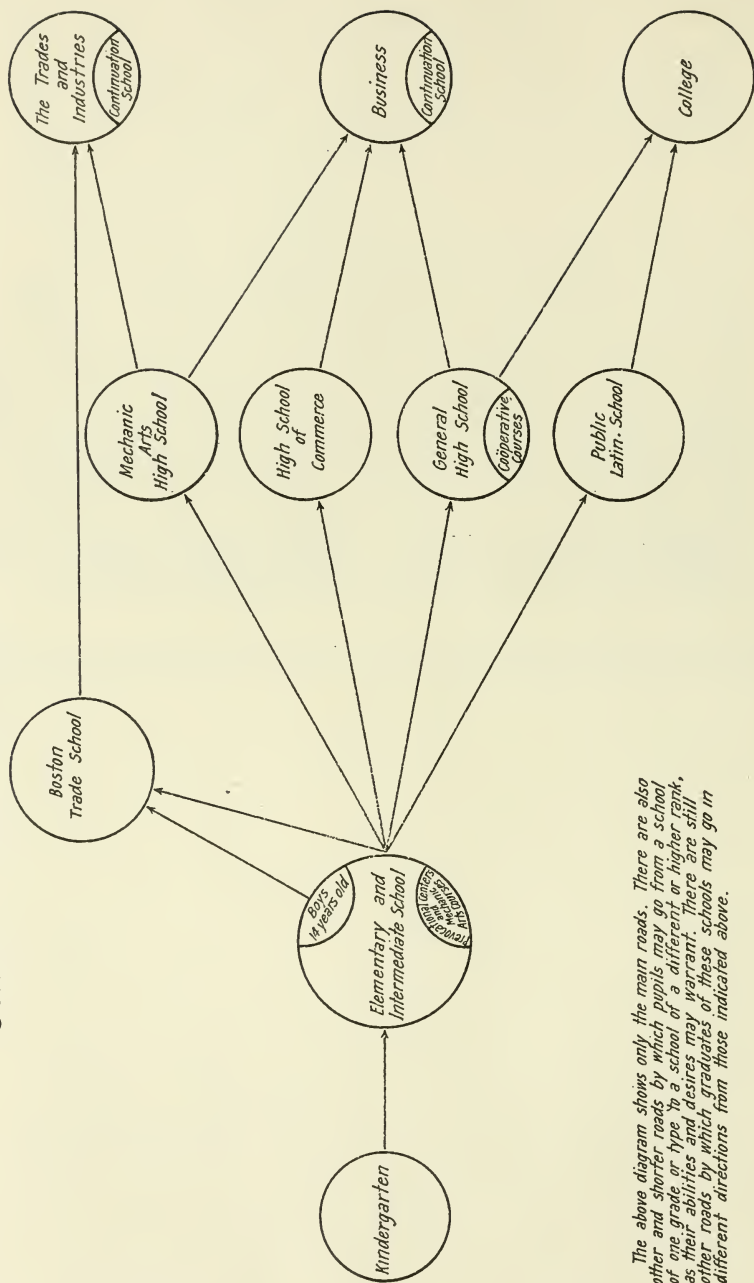
BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

the summer months when the sessions of the regular day schools are suspended. Besides these there are fields devoted to various forms of outdoor sports and games.

The charts inserted opposite page 20 show the main-travelled roads through the school system. These roads are all straight; they lead directly from one point to another, and the pupil who travels along any of these roads, and who is obliged or decides to leave them in his further progress along life's journey, may take his departure from certain definite points, with full assurance that in his progress he has accomplished something that has adequately rewarded his effort.

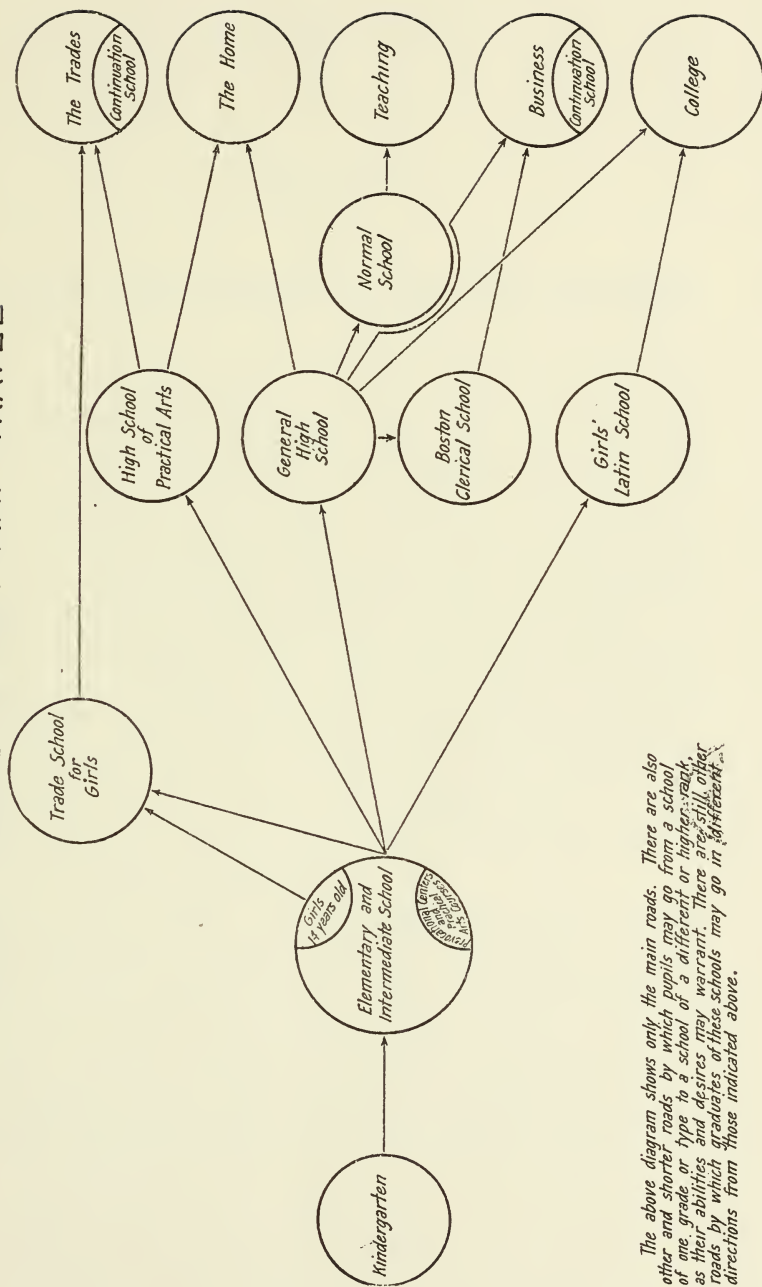
SCHOOL ROADS

SCHOOL ROADS A BOY MAY TRAVEL



The above diagram shows only the main roads. There are also other and shorter roads by which pupils may go from a school of one grade or type to a school of a different or higher rank, as their abilities and desires may warrant. There are still other roads by which graduates of these schools may go in different directions from those indicated above.

SCHOOL ROADS A GIRL MAY TRAVEL



The above diagram shows only the main roads. There are also other and shorter roads by which pupils may go from a school of one grade or type to a school of a different or higher grade, as the pupils' abilities and desires may warrant. There are still other roads by which graduates of these schools may go in other directions from those indicated above.

CHAPTER III

SCHOOL COMMITTEES AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

IN former years no self-respecting School Committee undertook its annual organization and election of officers except under the eye of a clergyman and fortified by the clergyman's appeal for the assistance of Divine Wisdom. This was an indispensable preliminary. Committees under the latest reorganization seem, however, to have got along equally well without "Benefit of clergy."

It is curious to note that small executive and legislative bodies seem less to require the assistance of the church than larger similar bodies. Who ever heard of a Board of Building Commissioners, or a Fire Commission, or a Police Commission inviting the assistance of a clergyman for its initial organization?

As the number of members of such bodies increases, the need of spiritual assistance seems to be more pronounced. City Councils require prayers when they begin their terms. Legislative bodies employ chaplains, some of whom get placed upon the regular pay roll. In such cases their services are sometimes required at

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every session. Either the National Senate or the House of Representatives once took great pride in the possession of a blind chaplain. Better judgment would have suggested the choice of one who was deaf.

Chaplains always pray for Divine Wisdom for their employers, but they do not guarantee that the prayer will be answered.

There are interesting and amusing stories told about some School Committeemen of former days. Of one, this is told. He visited a classroom and found written on the board, "One if by land, and two if by sea." He read the inscription aloud and turning to the class asked smilingly, "What's the answer?"

One member usually went to sleep during sub-committee meetings and had to be waked when his vote was wanted. Another quite frankly admitted when any matter of importance came up that he would have to get his instructions from his political idol. Still another became a fugitive from justice. There were some whose personalities were so negative that their presence or absence was scarcely noticed. But, then, even on juries there is sometimes poor timber.

On the other hand, consider the long line, that as yet shows no sign of coming to an end, of splendid men and women who, actuated merely by a sense of public duty, have given unstintingly of

PAST AND PRESENT

their time and ability, often to the neglect of their own affairs, to the upbuilding of the school system. They have been unpaid; they have received no tangible rewards; they have been subjected to unjust criticism; their motives have been impugned; appreciation has been lacking, in many instances they have not even been thanked by those they have tried to help. Yet they have gone on year after year — patient, tolerant, without trace of bigotry or selfishness in the performance of a public duty. Taken as a whole the Boston School Committee represents a high type of American citizenship.

Candidates for election to the School Committee sometimes have curious experiences, and are often in great doubt whether or not they will be successful in their campaigns. Some of them adopt strenuous methods, frequently addressing audiences, setting forth reforms that they hope to accomplish, and otherwise endeavoring to create a favorable background. Others are content to take a less active interest in a campaign, and sometimes evidence no interest at all so far as the seeking of office is concerned.

In former days securing the Republican, Democratic, or some other party nomination was regarded as of great importance, and frequently was a determining factor. An endorsement or nomination by the Public School Association was

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variously regarded. Sometimes it was sought as an asset, sometimes it was declined as a liability. The most curious incident that can be recalled was that which befell a man who had long been a School Committee member. He delighted in his work; he took a deep and personal interest in every matter that came up for consideration in the Committee; he was earnest, sincere, and valuable. He was somewhat jealous of another member whose term of service was slightly longer than his own. One of his ambitions was to gain the distinction of being the senior member in point of service that had ever served upon the School Committee. He was making good progress in that direction. He was practically always sure of an election. His friends within and without the school system were numerous. Everybody liked him; many loved him. One year when his election was at stake, to his surprise he received a nomination from every party in the field. He settled back complacently. Whoever might be defeated, he was sure of an election. He was defeated, and no one, not even himself, could understand why. He came back again later, but the continuity of his service had been broken, and his rival on the Board indulged in slight jibes at his expense.

In some elections when a large number of candidates were in the field, those whose surnames

PAST AND PRESENT

were near the head of the alphabet rejoiced with a great and exceeding joy — an A or a B would get elected, while a T or a W would fall in defeat. Various methods were seriously discussed of equalizing the chances of the candidates on some other basis.

A former Committeeman, who now sits on the bench, once remarked that the School Committee had been “afflicted with a plague of lawyers.” Certainly there have been many men of that profession who have served upon it. They have discharged their duties with marked skill, ability, and devotion, and have steered the School Committee ship through many troubled waters. They are especially noted for the patience with which they listen to complaints and grievances, and for the consideration which they give to all matters brought before them for decision. Perhaps they hope to become judges and so cultivate the habit of listening.

The medical profession has also frequently been represented on the Committee and is likewise entitled to similar commendation, from which should not be excluded any representative or representatives of business or social life. It is curious to note, however, that during the last twenty-five years, not a single clergyman has been elected to the Committee. Possibly the members of that profession believe that it is sufficient for them to

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look after the spiritual needs of the community, and that others should shoulder the responsibility for its educational welfare.

This was not so in former years. The clergy was frequently well represented on the Committee. A number of schools have been named in honor of distinguished clergymen — among them Bishop Cheverus, Archbishop Williams, Phillips Brooks, Theodore Parker. In the days of the old Primary School Committee, schools were occasionally named in honor of deacons; but great care was always taken to name the smaller schools for the deacons, and to reserve the larger ones for the ministers. Those old Committeemen knew the respect due the cloth. But the deacons were also men of consequence and their rights were protected. There are now, or recently have been, deacons in the school service, but no one holds that against them.

The distinction of being the only living man for whom a public school in Boston has been named belongs to Ex-Mayor Hart.

CHAPTER IV

WOMEN ON THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

WHILE women had been elected and had served as members of School Committees in several cities and towns of Massachusetts, up to the municipal election in 1873 no woman, so far as is known, had ever been chosen to serve in this capacity in Boston. When it appeared that four women had been so elected for the year 1874, the President of the School Committee was directed to obtain the opinion of the City Solicitor as to the legality of women so to serve. The City Solicitor gave an adverse opinion which was referred to the next Board.

When the School Committee of 1874 met for organization, certificates of election were presented by two women: Abby W. May and Lucia M. Peabody. Ann. Adeline Badger and Lucretia Crocker had also been elected. At a following meeting the seat of Mrs. Badger, at the request of her family, was declared vacant.¹ Finally the matter came before the Supreme Judicial Court, but

¹ Here is an example of family dominance. Did the family fear the influence of Mrs. Badger on the School Committee, or the influence of the School Committee on Mrs. Badger?

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inasmuch as the School Committee itself had previously ruled that a woman was not entitled to a seat on the Committee, that action was held final and without appeal. Before the close of its session, however, the Legislature enacted a law which rendered women eligible as members of the School Committee.

We wish we knew what course the fair petitioners pursued before the Supreme Judicial Court in support of their aspirations. Did they rely solely upon the eloquence of learned counsel? Did they array themselves in their best bibs and tuckers, and try to influence justice in the court room by "nods and becks and wreathed smiles"?

A judge is like a traffic cop,
He tells the world to go or stop;
His austere frown is a thing of dread,
But "a cat may look at a king," they said.

Did they tag the honorable justices of the supreme court on the street with, "Decide for women"? Did they disturb their tranquil slumbers and hurl bricks through their windows?

Since that time women have enjoyed a fair amount of representation upon the Committee and still continue to do so.

They have displayed many useful qualities for such service. They take their duties very seriously; they are sympathetic; they have an uncanny knack for reading motives, and are not easily de-

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ceived. They like to make up their own minds rather than to have some one else do it for them.

They have even served as temporary chairmen. The first time this occurred the other members of the Committee were greatly at a loss to decide how properly to address the presiding officer. The difficulty was happily solved by one of the members, known by others on the Committee as "Presence and Voice." This gentleman had failed in his ambition to become chairman of the Committee himself, and in soliciting support used as an argument that Nature had conferred upon him the voice and presence so necessary to achieve distinction in that high office.

CHAPTER V

THE SUPERINTENDENT

THE Superintendent now enjoys full authority as the executive head of the school system on the educational side, and, while not in direct control of its expenditures, has a very large measure of influence in the administration of its finances and in the selection of sites and the construction of new school buildings. He is responsible only to the School Committee. There is nothing that the School Committee undertakes in which the Superintendent is not consulted, his advice sought, and his opinion carries with it great weight.

The office is of comparatively recent origin. It was established in 1851, and then and for many years thereafter the Superintendent was of small consequence as compared with the School Committee. He was expected to visit the schools, to advise and counsel teachers, to prescribe methods of instruction, and in general to act in an advisory capacity. His voice was not a loud one in School Committee councils. His opinion might be asked, but if the interests or opinions of the Committee

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were different, he had small chance of carrying his point.

About 1898 the office began to assume additional importance. The executive duties of the Superintendent were increased. He had more to do with the selection and appointment of teachers. His opinions generally were more deferred to by the Committee. He participated in their deliberations and attended meetings of sub-committees. He expressed his opinions with more freedom. His position was steadily growing in importance and dignity.

His powers were substantially increased in the reorganization of 1906. Between that date and the present, many efforts were made, not alone in Boston, but in other cities throughout the country, to make the Superintendent a one-man power, and almost, if not quite, to subordinate the School Committee or the Board of Education to him. In some cities it was asserted that all school activities should be placed under the sole and exclusive control of the Superintendent, including even the construction of buildings and the making of all expenditures. He was to occupy the throne alone. Something of this kind was tried in a limited number of cities, but has not met with widespread or popular support. A few Superintendents in the country, who are, perhaps, naturally autocratic, are often in hearty sympathy with such a

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plan of organization, but the more conservative and thoughtful Superintendents do not seek to press their powers to such an extent. They recognize that perhaps there is a natural division between the educational and the business side of a school system, and perhaps that a department having to do with the building of buildings should be at least semi-independent and not subject to direct control either by the business or by the educational authority, and that the Board of Education or School Committee should remain, as it has been in Boston for many years, in supreme authority. The present tendency appears not to be toward one-man control, but rather to continue divisions of authority differing in detail in various cities, but having many points of resemblance.

During the last few years the Superintendent of Schools has had additional duties conferred upon him by law. He is the one who selects text books and prescribes courses of study, subject, of course, to final action by the School Board or Committee. In Boston he is assisted very largely by the Board of Superintendents, whose recommendations on these and many other matters are submitted to him and by him transmitted to the School Committee for final action.

Boston has been fortunate in the Superintendents who have successively been at the head of its school system. They have been capable,

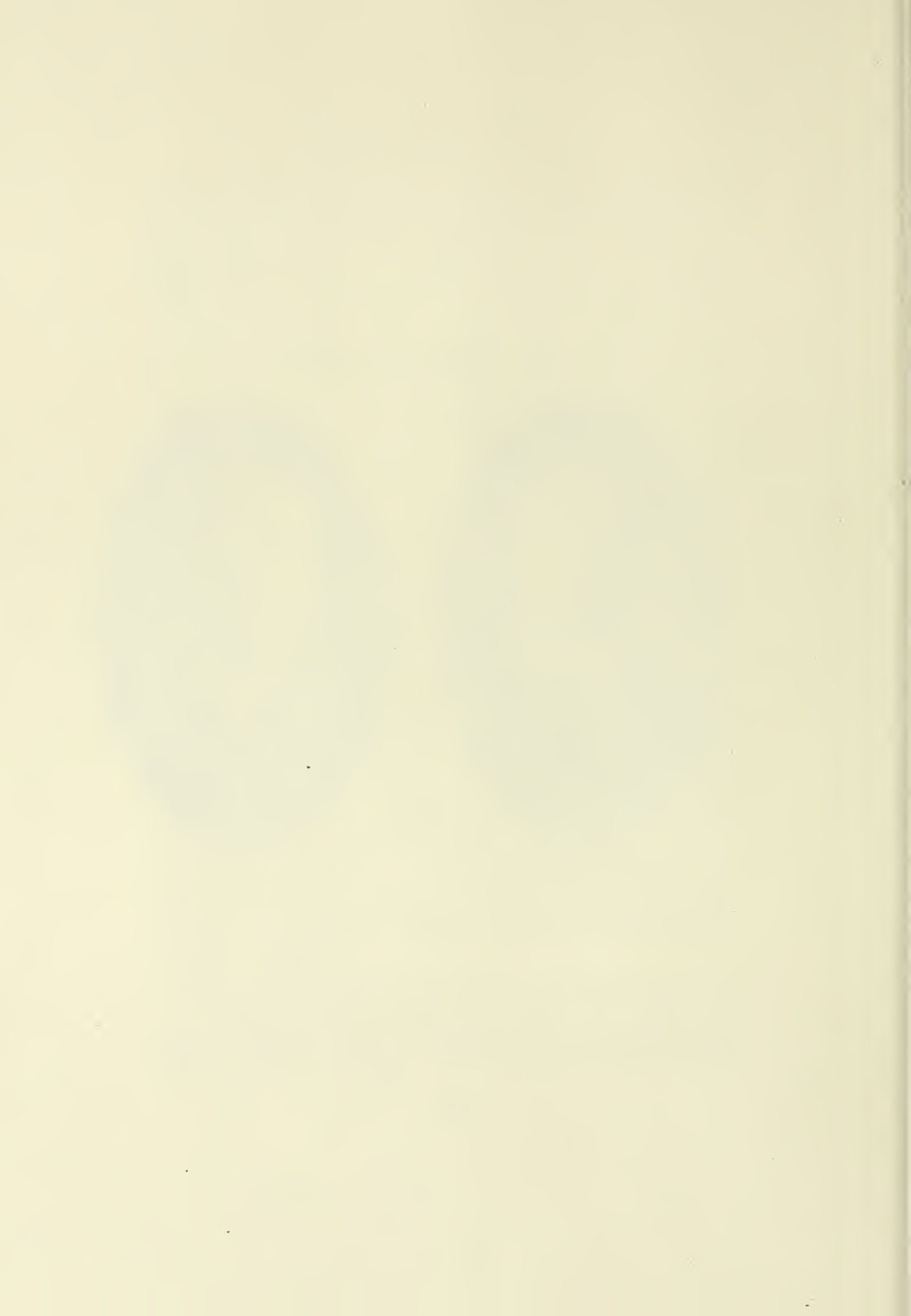
TWO SUPERINTENDENTS



FRANK V. THOMPSON



JEREMIAH E. BURKE



PAST AND PRESENT

sagacious, constructive, and progressive. Yet they have never allowed progressiveness to lead them too fast along the path of progress. They have been deluded by few will-o'-the-wisps of education.

Their terms has been as follows:

Nathan Bishop, May 13, 1851-Nov. 30, 1856.

John D. Philbrick, Dec. 22, 1856-May 12, 1874; Feb. 29, 1876-Jan. 22, 1878.

Samuel Eliot, Jan 22, 1878-Sept. 1, 1880.

Edwin P. Seaver, Dec. 1, 1880-Aug. 31, 1904.

George H. Conley, Sept. 1, 1904-Dec. 20, 1905.

Stratton D. Brooks, Mar. 21, 1906-Apr. 30, 1912.

Franklin B. Dyer, Sept. 1, 1912-Aug. 31, 1918.

Frank V. Thompson, Sept. 1, 1918-Oct. 23, 1921.

Jeremiah E. Burke, Nov. 7, 1921-

CHAPTER VI

THE BOARD OF SUPERINTENDENTS

FROM 1876 to 1906 there existed a Board of Supervisors composed of seven members, elected by the School Committee. The duties of this Board in respect of the examination of pupils, the examination and certification of candidates for appointment to the teaching force, recommendations of text books, the visiting, criticising and helping of teachers, and the performance of such other duties as might be assigned them by the Superintendent, were continued and transmitted to its successor, the Board of Superintendents, who in number may not exceed six.

The old Board of Supervisors and its individual members were sometimes the target for criticism by the School Committee, or by some of its members, especially when their influence or assistance was sought in behalf of some particular individual or individuals in whom the members of the Committee were personally interested.

That time has long gone by. The Board of Superintendents is an extremely important body in the administration of the school system. The

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duties assigned to its members are such as to tax the time and capacity of any man or woman. They have no time for leisure. Their duties are multifarious. They were occasionally referred to as the eyes of the Superintendent. They are now not only his eyes, but his hands as well. He is their Chairman and usually presides at their meetings. They have to do not only with the examination of candidates who desire to enter the teaching service, but with promotional examinations, formulating courses of study, meeting with teachers' councils, examining text and supplementary books, conducting teachers' courses, holding conferences with principals and other groups of teachers on various subjects, visiting particular schools assigned to them, supervising the instruction in particular subjects, such as music, manual training, and mathematics, and, indeed, carrying their work home with them night after night; and, strictly in accordance with the language of the regulations, "devoting themselves faithfully to the discharge of their duties."

Two of their number are also members of the so-called "Board of Apportionment," on which the Superintendent and the Business Agent also serve. This Board prepares the annual appropriation order, and recommends the apportionment of the expenditures for various purposes, which the School Committee has available; visits pro-

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posed sites; confers with the Board of School-house Commissioners as to needs with respect to additional school accommodations; recommends changes in the salary schedule; and bases all of its recommendations upon statistics gathered from the most reliable sources, and reaches its conclusions upon a strictly impersonal basis.

For some time it has been felt that the Board of Superintendents has been overburdened in the examination which it conducts of candidates for teachers' positions, and there has recently been appointed a Chief Examiner. To him has now been assigned many of the details to which the Board of Superintendents formerly was obliged to give consideration. It has frequently been suggested and it is not unlikely that there will be established a Board of Examiners, which will deal with all questions with which such a Board would naturally concern itself. This would very largely relieve the present pressure upon the Board of Superintendents, which is steadily increasing.

In the old days, under the Board of Supervisors, some of their duties were more minute and they decided whether or not individual pupils in the grammar schools should or should not receive a diploma. If in the final examination a pupil fell a decimal point below the dead line, he did not get a diploma; that was all there was to it. Certain masters occasionally would place the final mark

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of a pupil a trifle below that required for receiving a diploma, and would then make an appeal to the Board of Supervisors to make an exception in that pupil's favor. On the official blank the principal would sometimes make an entry which would prevent the getting of a diploma, and he would appear then personally before the Board of Supervisors and recommend that a diploma be granted. The simple expedient of seeing that the mark that he himself gave was sufficiently high to insure the awarding of a diploma without question did not seem to occur to him.

The Board of Superintendents still reviews the official markings by the principals of the pupils in their respective schools, but these marks are not based upon final examinations, but upon the year's work, and such trifling and vexing questions as formerly were presented for settlement no longer arise.

In the examination of candidates for teachers' certificates of qualification great pains are taken. Not only is an effort made to establish the fitness of a candidate by written and oral examination, but a personal visit is made by one or more Assistant Superintendents to the classroom, usually in another town or city, where the candidate is employed, and by this means additional light is gained as to his or her more personal qualifications.

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As one star differs from another star in glory,
so differ the Assistant Superintendents in their
respective orbits; but they all shine and illumine
the dark paths of education.

CHAPTER VII

THE BLACK BOOKS

IN former days certain corporations and other employers kept what were called "Black Lists." Admission to such lists was distinctly not desirable. It decreased the chances of employment and diminished and sometimes entirely dammed up the flow of credit. The keeping of such lists finally came to be regarded as contrary to public policy and was frowned upon by the courts.

There is a modern publication frequently referred to and entitled "Who's Who." It has its limitations, however. It deals only with the successes and not with the failures of society. High achievement in the fertile fields of crime will not gain admission to its pages. A man may wreck a bank or exploit a new financial system like Ponzi, but that does not get him a place on the pages of "Who's Who." He may, however, get into jail.

The Board of Supervisors years ago built up a small library of so-called "black books," to which admission was also restricted. Those whose names

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appear on the pages of these books were not placed there because of any moral delinquency, but merely because they were teachers in the schools. In these books the Supervisors recorded their opinions and estimates of the teachers under their supervision, as gained by personal visits. Their comments were always frank, sometimes pungent, sometimes commendatory, sometimes critical, but never unkindly. The books themselves were carefully guarded, kept under lock and key, and access to them was permitted only to officers and members of the Committee. If a former teacher was elected to the Committee, he hastened to read his record as it appeared in the "Black Book." Sometimes he was pleased, sometimes he was chagrined.

The poet Burns once lamented —

"Oh, wad some power the giftie gi'e us
To see oursel's as others see us!"

Former teachers who were elected to the School Committee had such an opportunity. It is doubtful whether a School Committeeman ever voted with whole-hearted enthusiasm for the re-election of a Supervisor who had once put in writing too critical an opinion of the member's previous service as a teacher.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BOSTON MASTER

THE Boston master has ever been held in high and honorable esteem. He has been and still is a man of influence and standing, especially in the local community which he serves. He is acquainted personally both with pupils and their parents. He guides and advises both. He is peculiar and distinctive. He obtains his position only by promotion in the service. A man may and has been Superintendent of Schools in another city and has become Superintendent of the whole school system in Boston, but his initial appointment, with but a single exception, has never been to the mastership of a grammar or elementary school. The master of a school, or even a Superintendent in another town or city, usually enters the service in the rank of sub-master, and, occasionally, even in some lower rank, trusting to time and opportunity to rise to a higher position.

To be sure, outsiders as distinguished from the "native-born" have occasionally entered the service by appointment as principal of a high school, but high schools, of course, are merely modern in-

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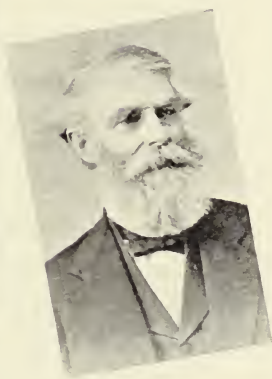
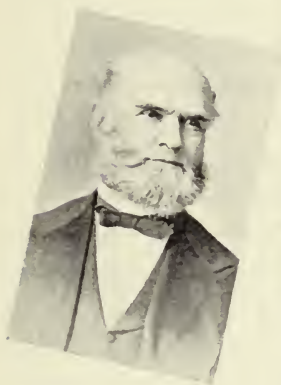
novations and inventions. Their roots do not go down so deeply into the soil as those of the old and glorious Boston grammar school. Yet even here we must pause to note the Public Latin School, older than Harvard College. To be the head master of that school is indeed something to be proud of.

In 1840 Harrison Gray Otis told Edward Everett Hale how he himself, a little boy of nine years old, entered the school room in School Street, on the 19th of April, 1775, just in time to hear old Lovell (the head master) say, "War's begun and school's done, *deponite libros.*" This shows that they still used the Latin language in the work of the school. It also shows a certain fear on Lovell's side that the pupils would not have understood if Lovell had said "*Initium belli, scholæ finis.*"

Five of the forty-five signers of the Declaration of Independence were Public Latin School boys. They were Benjamin Franklin, Samuel Adams, Robert Treat Paine, John Hancock, and William Hooper.

Bostonians, however, seem highly to approve of their high schools; their children pour into them in an ever-rising flood, so that Boston has the largest proportion of pupils attending high schools of any large city in the United States.

Boston is the most cultured city in the United States, at least some visitors say so, and is passion-



GEORGE B. HYDE
JAMES A. PAGE
WILLIAM H. LONG

JOSHUA BATES
DANIEL C. BROWN
GEORGE SWAN

CALEB EMERY
JOSIAH A. STEARNS
HOSEA H. LINCOLN

ately determined that her children shall be still more cultured.¹ President Coolidge once exhorted the world to "have faith in Massachusetts." Bostonians need no such exhortation with regard to their city or their public schools.

Twenty-five years ago the master of a Boston school was like the head of a little principality in a surrounding kingdom. In his school he was practically supreme. He conducted its affairs largely according to his own ideas. He listened not too kindly to the voice of authority. Usually he was a man of character and force, tenacious in his opinions, and not easily swayed. Often he bore a name not given him by his parents or in baptism, but conferred by his pupils as indicative of some official or personal peculiarity and often in a spirit of affection. Witness, "Jimmy" Page,² for fifty-five years master of the Dwight School and held in loving remembrance by thousands of Boston boys; stately and dignified in appearance; courteous in manner; precise in speech, yet with a kindly twinkle in his eye; truly a gentleman of the old school. He trained to useful citizenship many of the successful business and professional men of today.

One master who died some few years ago had a

¹ Is Boston more cultured than Cambridge which adjoins it and is the home of Harvard College? Some competent authority should settle this question.

² Said to have been the only man that ever licked John L. Sullivan. This was before the rise to fame of James J. Corbett.

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hobby to the gratification of which he apparently looked forward with much interest. During several of his calls at "Mason Street" he talked about what he intended to do after his retirement from the school service. He purposed to raise pigs. He seemed to think that a pig was a gentle and a kindly animal, deserving of cultivation, but whether as a household pet or for consumption as food he never made quite clear. Unfortunately, he died while in the service and his modest ambition was never gratified.

Another whose health was becoming impaired, and who seemed to feel that he was approaching his end, thus outlined what he thought would take place during the final ceremonies.

"I shall lie still and cold before you. I shall say nothing; I shall not look at you. You will gather around me; you will gaze at my quiet face, and you will say, 'Poor old cuss!'"

Another never disclosed the ambition that perhaps he did not even suspect himself. He subsequently served for several terms in the Massachusetts House of Representatives, where he gave faithful, efficient, and honorable service.

In the schools of former days the sub-master was the heir-apparent and as such generally recognized. His path cleared by death, he succeeded to his inheritance almost as a matter of course. Sometimes he had rivals with whom to struggle,

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but usually his accession met with little, if any, opposition.

When "Ushers" were "Hushers"¹ content they remained,
Promotion they rarely if ever obtained;
But now as sub-masters they're anxious to rule,
As soon as they can at the head of a school.

Today but three of the masters of twenty-five years ago — Loea P. Howard, Charles Sumner District; F. Morton King, Minot District; and Edward W. Scheurch, Bowditch District — remain in the service, but several others are yet actively engaged in other fields of usefulness.

The pictures of many well-known former masters have been included in this book. It has, however, been impossible to make as complete a collection as would have been desirable.

Let us call the roll and note the changes that time has wrought: —

*Larkin Dunton	.	.	.	.	.	Normal School.
*Lincoln Owen	.	.	.	.	.	Rice Training-School.
*Moses Merrill	.	.	.	.	.	Public Latin School.
*John Tetlow	.	.	.	.	.	Girls' Latin School.
*John C. Ryder	.	.	.	.	.	Brighton High School.
*John O. Norris	.	.	.	.	.	Charlestown High School.
*Charles J. Lincoln	.	.	.	.	.	Dorchester High School.
John F. Eliot	.	.	.	.	.	East Boston High School.
*Robert E. Babson	.	.	.	.	.	English High School.
*John Tetlow	.	.	.	.	.	Girls' High School.
Charles W. Parmenter	.	.	.	.	.	Mechanic Arts High School.
*Charles M. Clay	.	.	.	.	.	Roxbury High School.
*George C. Mann	West Roxbury High School.

¹ So called in the "Dark Ages."

* Deceased.

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*Frank F. Preble	Adams School.
*Tilson A. Mead	Chapman School.
*J. Willard Brown	Emerson School.
Augustus H. Kelley	Lyman School.
*Samuel J. Bullock	Bunker Hill School.
William B. Atwood	Frothingham School.
*Warren E. Eaton	Harvard School.
*William H. Furber	Prescott School.
*Edward Stickney	Warren School.
*Alonzo Meserve	Bowdoin School.
*Granville S. Webster	Eliot School.
*Lewis H. Dutton	Hancock School.
*Elias H. Marston	Phillips School.
*Orlando W. Dimick	Wells School.
*Quincy E. Dickerman	Brimmer School.
*E. Bentley Young	Prince School.
Alfred Bunker	Quincy School.
*Robert Swan	Winthrop School.
*James A. Page	Dwight School.
Myron T. Pritchard	Everett School.
*Granville B. Putnam	Franklin School.
*Silas C. Stone	Hyde School.
Francis A. Morse	Sherwin School.
*J. Gardner Bassett	Bigelow School.
*Thomas H. Barnes	Gaston School.
Joshua M. Dill	John A. Andrew School.
Amos M. Leonard	Lawrence School.
*Maurice P. White	Lincoln School.
Fred O. Ellis	Norcross School.
*Henry C. Hardon	Shurtleff School.
*John F. Dwight	Thomas N. Hart School.
*William H. Martin	Comins School.
Charles F. King	Dearborn School.
*Sarah J. Baker	Dillaway School.
*Leverett M. Chase	Dudley School.
*Henry L. Clapp	George Putnam School.
*John R. Morse	Hugh O'Brien School.
*William L. P. Boardman	Lewis School.
Edward P. Sherburne	Martin School.

* Deceased.

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*John T. Gibson	Agassiz School.
Henry L. Sawyer	Bennett School.
Edward W. Schuerch	Bowditch School.
Loea P. Howard	.	.	.	.	Charles Sumner School.
Frederic H. Ripley	.	.	.	.	Longfellow School
*Daniel W. Jones	.	.	.	.	Lowell School.
William E. C. Rich	.	.	.	.	Robert G. Shaw School.
*George W. M. Hall	.	.	.	.	Washington Allston School.
*William E. Endicott	.	.	.	.	Christopher Gibson School.
*Henry B. Miner	.	.	.	.	Edward Everett School.
*Edward M. Lancaster	.	.	.	.	Gilbert Stuart School.
*Horace W. Warren	.	.	.	.	Henry L. Pierce School.
*N. Hosea Whittemore	.	.	.	.	Mary Hemenway School.
*Edward Southworth	.	.	.	.	Mather School.
F. Morton King	.	.	.	.	Minot School.
Edwin T. Horne	.	.	.	.	Roger Clap School.
Hiram M. George	.	.	.	.	Tileston School.
Sarah Fuller	.	.	.	.	Horace Mann School.

These departed ones, whose names appear upon the foregoing list and others like them, are still held in warm and even affectionate remembrance. Some were kind and indulgent; some were stern disciplinarians.

"Full well they laughed with counterfeited glee,
 At all his jokes, for many a joke had he.
 Full well the busy whisper circling round,
 Conveyed the dismal tidings when he frowned."

It is not to be inferred that the master of today is inferior in any respect to the one of yesterday. But he is different. He attains command rank at an earlier age. He still is appointed from within and not from without the school system. He is

* Deceased.

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required to prove his fitness for a mastership in various ways. His academic and professional training, his experience, his executive ability, the courses he has pursued to improve his professional standing, even his personal appearance are all taken into account, and under an elaborate and somewhat complicated system of marks he is placed upon an eligible list and appointed, as vacancies occur, in the order of his standing upon the list, which is revised and re-issued biennially.

He comes in competition with ambitious women teachers who aspire to the same rank, whereas twenty-five years ago there was but one woman principal of a grammar school in Boston. Today there are ten women principals, the most recent ones having been selected and appointed in accordance with the same plan which applies to their rivals of the other sex. It may be said without fear of contradiction that these women principals have proved themselves as capable and effective administrators as the men, and that their schools are conducted on a plane of efficiency in no wise inferior to the schools of which men are the heads.

The co-ordination and unification of the entire school system has gone on for the period under survey steadily and progressively. The differences between the elementary schools that in the past



MAURICE P. WHITE
CHARLES F. KING
MYRON T. PRITCHARD

THOMAS H. BARNES
SARAH FULLER
ALFRED BUNKER

HORACE W. WARREN
EDWARD P. SHERBURNE
ELIAS H. MARSTON

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were due largely to the personality and ideas of the masters at their heads, have largely disappeared. Uniformity has increased. The courses of study are pursued in one school in about the same way as in another. Special privileges and irregularities of administration have disappeared. A pupil may transfer from one school to another without his progress through the system being checked or impeded by the change. Each master appreciates that he is part of a system which deals with all alike and that the several schools are no longer separate and distinct entities that may manage their own affairs with little reference to the manner in which other similar units conduct theirs.

CHAPTER IX

THE BOSTON TEACHER

TWENTY-FIVE years ago many of the teachers who had been in the service for considerable periods, and a very large proportion of new appointees, were friends of some member of the Committee. They frequently owed their appointment to his kindly interest in their behalf and to the good opinion which he entertained of their character and qualifications. Of course none could be appointed who had not successfully passed an examination given by the Board of Supervisors, but having received a certificate, their appointment depended very largely upon personal grounds. The administrative system then in operation peculiarly lent itself to this course. The schools were divided into groups which corresponded roughly with the geographical divisions of the city as, for example, East Boston, Charlestown, North End, Roxbury, Dorchester, etc. Each of these school divisions was under the particular guidance and control of a committee consisting of five members. Some of these committees exercised a close supervision over the conduct of the

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schools under their charge. Often, however, one or two of the more active and interested members of each division committee assumed most of the responsibility belonging to the committee as a whole, and exerted a good deal of power and authority. When a teacher was needed, the master of the school concerned usually consulted the committee in charge of his district, or the chairman of that committee, or sometimes the most active member on the committee, and made his recommendations or ascertained the views of the committeeman on the subject with respect to the selection of a candidate. Sometimes opposition to a particular candidate developed in some of these local committees and appointments were long delayed until a majority vote could be secured to settle the matter. Once having been approved by the division committee, the candidates' names went to a committee on nominations also consisting of five members, and were usually approved as a matter of course, although at times the struggle between contending factions was fought out to a finish before the committee on nominations. At each meeting of the School Committee, the various nominations which had successfully passed the division committee and the committee on nominations were submitted for formal approval and usually received it, although the path of the candidate was not always smooth,

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especially in the case of the more important appointments.

To A. Lawrence Lowell, now President of Harvard University and then a member of the Committee, was due very largely the success of the movement to curb the powers of these division committees, and to make the Superintendent alone responsible for selecting and recommending the appointment of members of the teaching staff. Of course, there being no eligible list and no definite and precise plan governing such appointments, a good deal of pressure was very often exercised upon the Superintendent in favor of particular individuals, and he frequently experienced great difficulty in arriving at a decision that would not involve too much opposition. The Superintendent's path, if he undertook to remove an incompetent teacher, was difficult and sometimes dangerous. A former Superintendent once remarked with some humor: "I attempted to get rid of Miss X. She came a good deal nearer getting rid of me."

All this has now long passed and has been almost forgotten. In 1906 the first eligible list was established. On this list the candidates' names were arranged in the order of their standing as determined by examination by the Board of Superintendents. Appointments were and are made strictly in the order of standing, beginning at the

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head of the list. It was several years before it was generally and definitely realized that this new system was seriously to be carried into effect; yet so far as can be recalled, there has never been an instance where the rule governing such appointments has been deviated from for the benefit of any individual. When that situation was once generally appreciated, both by the teaching staff and by persons anxious to obtain the appointment of friends or relatives, the pressure for appointment upon school officers and upon the School Committee automatically ceased. It required only a general understanding that no amount of pressure, no influence, no inducement would hasten the appointment of any certified candidate until reached upon the eligible list, to end once and for all the clamor which was sometimes very insistent for appointment to the service.

At the present time and for many years, appointments are made entirely upon an impersonal basis. This is generally understood. A candidate once on the list has no occasion to seek influence or other assistance. When a certain name is reached in due order, the appointment is tendered, and in advance of that neither a candidate nor a candidate's friends need pay the slightest attention to the matter.

It should not be inferred from the outline that is herein given as to a bad system of appointment,

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that bad appointments were usually made. On the contrary a great majority of the teachers of former years, as well as those who are now in the service, were well prepared, adequately examined, competent, skillful and devoted to their duties. The real trouble with the system in respect to the teaching service was caused by the retention of teachers who had outlived their usefulness. There were occasional resignations of women teachers to marry and on account of physical breakdown, but retirement on account of age was practically unknown. The ambition of practically all teachers was to die in the harness, and they were reluctant to leave until the final summons came. Their position was a life one and so regarded, and, indeed, they are not to be blamed for so regarding it, because pensions were unknown, salaries low, and living expenses continuous and not to be avoided.

The reorganization of the School Committee, which became effective in 1906 when the number of members was reduced from twenty-four to five, brought about sweeping and drastic changes in administration. One of the early acts of the new Committee was the adoption of the so-called seventy-year rule, which automatically terminated the service of all teachers and members of the supervising staff on attaining the age of seventy. This new rule was bitterly fought. Indeed, the

objections raised against it were so strong, and the complaint at its being put into immediate effect so vigorous, that its application was postponed for a year after it was originally adopted. At about the same time, recognizing the effect that this new rule would have upon the large number of teachers who had assumed that they enjoyed a life tenure of employment, the Committee secured the passage of an act by the Legislature establishing a non-contributory pension plan, which provided for a pension at the rate of \$180, which was subsequently increased to \$600, on attainment of the age of sixty-five and completion of thirty years of service. This pension act also expressly conferred upon the Committee the power to retire on pension any teacher of any age who, in the opinion of the Committee, was incapacitated for further efficient service.

This new arrangement promptly produced beneficial results for the system as a whole. It forced the retirement of the superannuated and cleared the way for the young, active, and ambitious. To be sure, it bore hardly on certain individuals who lost a large part of their income and faced the necessity of adopting a more modest way of living in their later years than they had anticipated. But, on the other hand, the school system itself was largely benefited, and younger, and more energetic teachers rapidly replaced those whose

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time of most useful service had, through no fault of their own, gone by.

One of the principal objections soon made and repeatedly renewed in subsequent years was to the flat pension rate of \$600 which applied to all teachers regardless of their salary. The masters of various schools especially made repeated efforts to secure legislation which would result in the pension being based to some extent upon previous salary. These attempts, however, were invariably defeated by the efforts of the women teachers, especially in the elementary schools, who numerically were the largest group in the service.

The recently adopted new retirement system, which applies to all city employees, has met this objection, and all pensions are based upon length of service, salary received, and contributions made by the members of the system. Under this new system, teachers in the service at the time it went into effect in February, 1923, were given the option to continue under the non-contributory plan with a maximum pension of \$600, or to enter the new system with a varying amount of pension. A large number accepted the new plan; others preferred to continue under their old standing.

By far the greater number of the teachers in the service devote themselves faithfully and conscientiously to the duties assigned them. They give unstintingly to their work the best that is in

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them. Year after year they go on patiently and persistently in the training of their pupils for useful American citizenship. Little is heard from them outside of their regular school duties. They are no more discontented with their lot than the average man or woman in professional or business life. They have, of course, moments of discouragement and discontent, but, on the whole, they are appreciative of the advantages of their position and realize that their profession has compensations outweighing the disadvantages.

There is always, however, a minority seeking to improve existing conditions and raising, from time to time, issues affecting their professional lives, that are brought before a perplexed School Committee for solution or adjustment. This minority, which frequently has active and energetic leadership, is sometimes heard from in no uncertain tone. It always bases its demands upon its right for "justice," cheerfully unconscious that justice is as elusive as happiness, and that even the Supreme Court of the land sometimes fails to meet expectations in this respect. The desires and ambitions of teachers of the various ranks are not infrequently antagonistic and difficult of reconciliation. On one point alone are their views generally in accord — that their salaries should be increased. For this point of view there has been in the past justification, sometimes

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to the extent of general recognition not only by themselves, but by the administration and by the community, and when it is considered that the maximum salary of an elementary school teacher has increased during the last twenty-five years from \$936 to \$2,000, it is apparent that there has been substantial progress in this direction.

The teachers of yesterday looked to the School Committee for a settlement of all grievances. The authority of the School Committee was accepted as final and conclusive. There was no appeal. The teachers of today reflect that in union there is strength, and band together in more or less definite organizations, sometimes distinct, sometimes interlocking, in pursuit of "justice." They employ legal counsel and legislative agents; they are not unacquainted with the gentle art of lobbying; they invoke the referendum; they are in some ways at least "progressives." Let it not be said of them that they are content with things as they are. At times a divine discontent possesses them and they voice it in no uncertain terms. Sometimes they accomplish their purpose in full or in part. Sometimes the Committee, and even the Legislature, fails to heed the prayer of the suppliant, and the thumb is turned down. Yet cheerfully they arise to the next occasion and present their case with eloquence, fortified with argument and persuasion.

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Some of the more important and recent questions outside of the strict limits of their daily duties that have engaged the attention and aroused the activities of the teaching staff have been these: The securing of increased salaries; further participation in establishing courses of study, and determining methods of instruction; increased pensions; the ten versus the twelve payment plan, the latter the subject of repeated hearings before the Committee, at which the views of the representatives of different ranks of the teaching staff seemed hopelessly divergent.

The latest matter of real and lively interest is known as the equal pay for equal service proposition, on which the referendum has been invoked. In broad and general terms, this means that no distinction based upon sex shall control compensation, but the future promises the raising of vexatious and difficult questions as to the practical application of a reasonable principle. For example, is the service rendered by a man sub-master and that rendered by a woman master's assistant equal? Is the service rendered by a woman assistant in a high school and a man junior master in a similar school also to be so regarded? Is it desirable, and do parents generally favor that their children shall be exclusively under the control of women or of men teachers, or of both, during their entire school lives? What would be the cost of putting such a

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measure into effect? Will it drive men out of the service, reduce their number and, roughly speaking, feminize the schools? Or, will the salaries of women teachers generally advance until they are on a par with men teachers holding the same or similar ranks in the same schools? If so, what will this mean in dollars and cents to the taxpayer? The future will determine.

Those who favor this proposition will, of course, argue that the sex "is but the guinea's stamp," while those "reactionaries" who are opposed to all progress will still assert that "a man's a man for a' that."

The minority, some of whose characteristics have thus been briefly sketched, occasionally seriously offer proposals that enliven hearings. For example, at one hearing before the School Committee on some question or other in which he and his fellows were concerned, an enthusiastic young junior master stated that his well-considered opinion was that most of the evils, particularly the one he was then engaged in combating, would be cured by abolishing the Board of Superintendents, a body that he clearly regarded as a brake upon the chariot wheels of progress. At another time a master semi-humorously said that if "Mason Street," as the fount of administration was commonly termed, would cease from its troubling, stop making rules, and

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discontinue other interference with the real work of the schools, the masters and teachers could accomplish their ideals much better than they were able to do under existing circumstances. At another time the proposition was advanced that the teaching staff should unionize and become affiliated with a labor organization. The attention of the Committee was brought to this proposition, perhaps with the hope that it might forbid it, or at least raise objection, and an issue of principle to be fought out to the bitter end. The Committee, however, did nothing of the kind; it took no official action. It merely allowed it to be known that it supposed that teachers regarded themselves as members of a high and dignified profession. If, however, the teachers really thought that they belonged in the ranks of labor, let them unfold the flag of labor to the world and unionize to their hearts' content. Little more was heard of the matter and, so far as is known, the teachers' profession in Boston yet remains a virgin field for unionization.

At another hearing a young and callow sub-master, whose general incompetency was well-known to every one except himself, appeared and was heard as a witness in his own defense. He had prepared his case in writing and proceeded to read a statement setting forth that rules and regulations, confinement to established courses of

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study, and submission to the dictates of superiors cramped his style and fettered the free exercise of personal initiative necessary to successful teaching. He also urged that his principal should cease interference and leave him uncontrolled in the government of his pupils. In other respects, his statement was erratic, anarchistic, and bolshevistic. The Committee listened in silent amazement. At the conclusion of his statement, the sub-master looked around with a bland and child-like smile and asked, "Tell me, have I said anything that I ought not to have said? Am I wrong?" The chairman coldly replied that the Committee was there to ask and not to answer questions. The hearing closed. As to the sub-master of original ideas: There was a brief time and the place that knew him knew him no more.

CHAPTER X

THE ADMINISTRATIVE INFLUENCE OF THE
TEACHING CORPS

THE relationship between the administration and the teaching corps has undergone a radical change during the period under consideration. At its beginning, courses of study, text books, salaries, and other administrative measures were determined by the committee or by its educational advisers without much regard for the opinions or wishes of the teaching corps. Little by little and by successive steps the latter group has grown in influence and prestige. Take, for example, courses of study. At the beginning of this period courses were established by the Board of Supervisors and later by law this duty was imposed upon the Superintendent. As a matter of fact, however, the courses now originate very largely with the teachers themselves. Those who have shown particular interest and skill in the teaching of certain subjects are brought together in groups and given an opportunity to formulate their ideas in respect of the courses to be adopted. Their recommendations go to the Board of Super-

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intendents, of which Board the Superintendent is chairman, and are there discussed with thoroughness in detail, usually somewhat modified, and the final result submitted to and adopted by the School Committee. Practically the same course is followed in the adoption of text books. Teachers' councils are established which consider in the first instance the merits of books offered by publishers for adoption. Lists of books so approved are submitted by these councils to the Board of Superintendents, and each book is carefully examined by at least one member of that Board and frequently by several. The Superintendent is made familiar with these lists and his particular attention is given to any book about which there may be differences of opinion. Finally, the books which have successfully passed the scrutiny of these various examining Boards reach the School Committee and are adopted usually as a matter of course. Rarely does it happen that a book gets upon the list to which subsequent and valid objection may be made. It is, of course, true that somewhat recently there has been a wide wave of objection to certain histories which have been termed unpatriotic and un-American, but none has been found upon the Boston list, with one exception, to which the Board felt that sufficient objection existed to justify its discontinuance.

The recent era of high prices was attended by



FRANCIS A. MORSE
LINCOLN OWEN
HENRY L. SAWYER

CHARLES J. LINCOLN

HENRY L. CLAPP
N. HOSEA WHITTEMORE
JOSHUA M. DILL

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practically a nation-wide campaign for increasing the salaries of public school teachers. It was evident that there was ample justification for a substantial and general increase. The question was taken up by the Committee with representatives of teachers of the various ranks, thoroughly discussed, and as a result substantial increases were authorized. Investigation of the action taken in some other cities led to the conclusion that the increases granted elsewhere were somewhat excessive and likely to be followed by subsequent reductions as the era of inflation passed.

The Committee has put into effect during the past few years substantial increases for practically every employee that have especially benefited the teaching staff. In doing this, it had in mind the establishment of schedules that were fair and reasonably adequate, and that could probably be maintained without subsequent reduction. It has as yet seen no reason to believe that its judgment was at fault, nor is there apparent any general dissatisfaction with the present schedules.

One of the most serious problems with which successive Committees have had to deal within the past twenty-five years, has been the providing of sufficient school accommodations to meet the ever-growing school population, and to keep the continually increasing cost of such accommodations within reasonable limits. Experience has

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shown usually that notwithstanding the most careful estimates and the gathering of information from reliable sources, it is practically impossible to construct buildings with surplus accommodations for future needs. However large a new building may be planned, it is almost invariably filled as soon as it is ready for occupancy. It almost seems as though the supply created the demand, and no sooner is a new building opened than it is crowded to the doors.

Boston, however, has been far more happily situated than many other cities in this respect. There are and there have been practically no children for whom accommodations of one kind or another have not been provided, largely by the help of portable buildings, which are capable of being moved from place to place as needs require. With some of the high schools it has been necessary at times to adopt the so-called two-platoon system, so that one group of pupils goes in the forenoon and another group in the afternoon, but the spectacle of children of school age on the street deprived of the opportunity for instruction that is their due is unknown here.

During the past session of the Legislature, on urgent representations from the Committee, authority was secured to make additional appropriations for new sites and buildings. The Committee sought legislation upon which it could plan a

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three-year program, but the Legislature in its wisdom reduced this to a two-year plan and, therefore, it will undoubtedly be necessary to renew an application for further funds in the near future.

The limitations of the authority of the School Committee in respect of school accommodations are not generally understood, and the Committee is usually held responsible for things with which it really has little to do. It makes appropriations to meet the cost of additional sites, buildings, for the repair and maintenance of the school plant, and for temporary accommodations; but the actual expenditures are under practically the exclusive control of a salaried board of three commissioners who are appointed by the mayor. The School Committee, however, designates the particular school districts within which additional accommodations are found to be necessary, and the opinion of the Superintendent, but not necessarily his approval, is required in the selection of land and the construction of buildings which are matters with which the Board of School-house Commissioners, rather than the School Committee, is directly concerned.

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CHAPTER XI

SCHOOL REPORTS

THE Commonwealth entertains a high opinion of school reports. The law requires that School Committees shall annually cause such reports to be printed "for the use of the inhabitants," and even goes so far as to provide that the reports shall be in pamphlet form and of a certain size. As Boston is supposed to contain about 780,000 inhabitants, the law always has been construed in a liberal spirit, and it has been assumed that some of the inhabitants could get along without an individual report. They have done so without complaint.

An effort is also made to exercise good judgment in the distribution of such reports. Every principal and director receives one as a matter of course. So do many teachers, and any teacher may obtain one upon request. Applications from interested persons who are not inhabitants are also given favorable consideration. There is a somewhat extensive complimentary list which is never suspended. In general, it may be said that school reports are regarded as valuable contributions to

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educational literature, so valuable, indeed, that they are rarely read. In this connection, the following statement may be of interest: —

BRIEF SURVEY OF SCHOOL REPORT MARKET.

National Commissioner of Education. — Always send him a copy in order that he may know what a live school system is doing and keep abreast of the times. Probably he does not read all the reports he receives, but imitates Congress and employs a Reading Clerk.

State Commissioner of Education. — Is likewise sent a copy; his office usually asks for an additional copy, probably because the first copy is lost or mislaid.

Governor. — No. No state interference with local school administration wanted; be deferential, however, when additional money is applied for.

Mayor. — Copy sent, to remind him to tell people that "high tax rate is due to cost of public schools over which he has no control," etc.

City Council. — Unnecessary to send report. Council can't appropriate funds for school purposes; why worry?

Finance Commission. — Keep on list. Don't send Business Agent's report, it might start an investigation.

Public Library. — Takes sound position that no branch library should be without a school report; our best customer.

Other Public Libraries. — Always on request; libraries dislike vacant shelves.

Harvard. — Report sent with hesitation lest it disturb Olympian serenity.

Yale. — Shows no interest; probably thinks schools too closely tied up with Harvard; quite likely would not accept Cambridge school report as a gift.

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Columbia. — On regular list; frequently asks for additional copies; many teachers take its courses; this income appreciated, tends to reduce overhead; inclined to cultivate friendly relations; always "cordially yours."

Chicago University. — Conscientious librarian; frequently checks up collection and asks for missing copies.

Oklahoma University. — Until recently President, former Boston School Superintendent, never asks for copy. Why not?

Middle West. — Athirst for knowledge and slakes it at our fount.

Pacific Coast. — Spasmodic customer.

Boards of Education, Other Cities. — Regular exchange system; no votes of thanks either way.

School Superintendents, Other Cities. — *Ad lib.*; enlightens their darkness and gives them opportunity to tell world how much better they do things than we do.

Japan. — Quite frequent applications. In return sends us their reports — very useful.

China. — No interest. Public schools least of its troubles.

Scandinavian Countries. — Content to run schools without outside help.

Russia. — Revolution killed the trade.

Holland. — No inquiries; we seem to be "in Dutch."

Germany. — Formerly made occasional inquiry. We used to have a sneaking admiration for Germany's educational methods; imported a few professors, kindly loaned by Kaiser; Kaiser out of job; Germany now much more concerned with finances than with schools.

Austria. — Until lately flat broke; wanted money rather than reports.

Switzerland. — Never any orders. Perhaps Coolidge administration will renew Bryan's invitation to Switzerland to make naval demonstration in New York Harbor; better

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first consult Hughes; Switzerland not a party to his disarmament program.

France. — Once in a while; now more interested in reparations than in school reports.

England. — London County Council (if that is body corresponding to School Committee) was a former customer and sent its own reports, bulky volumes — well-grown dictionaries, with countless pages of figures; rather dry reading.

Italy. — Prefers to send children here to be educated.

Greece. — "No Help Wanted."

Spain. — No market. Fortunate enough in Spanish-American War to capture naval lieutenant; after war he saw the error of his ways, became an American citizen and high school teacher. Curiously enough, he teaches Spanish; does it well.

Portugal. — Off the map.

New Zealand. — Only one copy in a generation. "He never could be tempted to try it any more, once was enough for him."

Australia. — Occasional inquiry.

India. — Ditto.

Mexico. — Occasionally in the past; recognition will probably improve market.

Central and South American Countries. — *Mañana.*

General Public. — Market always in the doldrums.

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CHAPTER XII

JANITORS, CUSTODIANS, AND THE TRIAL BOARD

EACH building was formerly under the charge of a school janitor. The janitor exists no longer. He has been succeeded by the custodian, with all the added dignity that the new title implies. The janitors were and the custodians are a fine body of men, selected and appointed under strict civil service rules, fully conscious of the importance of their duties and responsibilities, and, with very few and occasional exceptions, performing them with marked efficiency and devotion. They are staunch supporters of law and order, and exercise a kindly and benevolent supervision over the young life by which they are surrounded. They impose no penalties for infractions of discipline and are apt to show a more indulgent attitude toward petty offenders than is the regular teaching staff. Many a distracted teacher is indebted to them for moral and sometimes physical support. They are far more than mere caretakers. Sometimes their influence is but little less than that exercised by their superiors. One custodian in particular, by reason of his long service and

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forceful personality, became an important figure in the life of the school to which he was assigned. He was interested in every school activity. He was an ardent supporter of all games in which the pupils took part. No reunion of graduates was complete without him. He lived respected and died regretted.

Some of them have under their charge a school plant having a valuation of from five hundred thousand to a million dollars and equipped with important and complicated apparatus for the operation and protection of which they are held solely responsible. Frequently in cold weather they spend twenty-four or more consecutive hours in personal charge of their buildings. Instances of inefficiency or neglect are rare. An occasional custodian is sometimes charged with the responsibility for some breakdown or damage to the apparatus under his charge. He is then brought before a Trial Board consisting of two school officials and a custodian, which makes an investigation of the circumstances and summons before it such other witnesses as that Board or the custodian concerned believes can throw further light on the subject. The Trial Board is governed by no rules of evidence. It seeks only to ascertain actual facts, and having established these to its satisfaction, recommends to the School Committee either that the custodian be cleared of the charge

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against him, or that an appropriate penalty be imposed upon him. It speaks well for this administrative device that during the many years it has been in operation, the findings of the Trial Board have invariably been sustained by the School Committee, although the Committee has sometimes reduced or increased the penalties which the Trial Board has recommended. The custodians themselves, however, have accepted without appeal the decisions of that Board, which are supported not by legal authority, as the custodians are protected by civil service rules, but by the general belief that its conclusions and recommendations are unbiased, reasonable, and for the interests of the service generally.

Occasionally charges are preferred against some custodian for dereliction of duty and the matter is heard before the Trial Board. This Board takes the stand that damage to the heating apparatus of a school building is not caused "by an act of God or the public enemy," and that it is up to the custodian to give a reasonable explanation of the occurrence and a sufficient excuse for its happening if he is not to be penalized.

Most of the custodians brought before the Trial Board meet whatever issue is raised fairly and frankly and tell the facts in the case, so far as they understand them, without evasion or equivocation. Sometimes, but very rarely, they attempt to dodge

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the issue. But the Trial Board is aided by expert advice from the School-house Department and from elsewhere if necessary, and the actual facts are usually made apparent.

"In the dear, dead days now gone beyond recall," when Volstead had not appeared above the horizon, once in a great while it would happen that some janitor would face charges of not being quite himself while on duty.

The Trial Board, having in mind that teachers are entitled to a sabbatical¹ year of absence after seven years of service, has been inclined to show some leniency to a janitor under the circumstances described, provided it did not occur more than once in seven years.

The wisdom of this policy, so far as it was a policy, did no particular harm to the system, and was very salutary in one or two instances where long and faithful service was entitled to consideration.

One of these trials was enlivened by a bit of amusing testimony. A charge of intoxication on duty was brought.

The janitor was asked if he was intoxicated.

He denied it.

Did he frequent places where liquor was sold? (This was forbidden by the regulations.)

He did not.

Then, to the consternation of the Trial Board

¹ Term "sabbatical year" probably suggested by old song entitled, "Every Day will be Sunday Bye and Bye."

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he volunteered the information that he carried it into the school on his hip.

Verdict: Not guilty. Don't do it again.

The duties which a school-house custodian is required to perform are very carefully and exhaustively defined in regulations established for his guidance. The number of times that windows shall be cleaned, floors swept, lawns cut, and other work is required to be done are exactly specified. Frequent inspections are made by the School-house Custodian, who commends or criticizes, as the case may be, the manner in which the custodians in charge of the various buildings discharge their duties.

What constitutes a neat and clean building is largely a matter of opinion, and what one person would consider a high standard, another would regard with an unfavorable eye. If a master or some active and aggressive teacher in a particular building has "a nose for dirt" and a finger that readily finds dust, the custodian is apt to have a rather unhappy time of it. Once in a while, no matter how careful and efficient a custodian may be, he doesn't stand a chance to escape unfavorable criticism.

Some years ago there was in the service a master who frequently claimed that his janitor service was unsatisfactory. Several changes were made, but without abatement of his complaints. Finally

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there was placed in charge of his building a notably efficient janitor. He promptly came under the condemnation that befell his predecessors. He was urged to take exceeding pains in the removal of dirt and dust. He claimed that he did. The master, on his side, asserted that he asked for nothing unreasonable and that the janitor did not keep up to a proper standard.

Finally, instructions were issued to the janitor to give the building an exceptionally thorough cleaning on Friday after the close of school, or on the following day. On Sunday the School-house Custodian, accompanied by the janitor of another building, who was highly regarded as being careful and particular, visited the building in question, without notice either to the master or to the man in charge, and proceeded to sweep and dust the building throughout with the utmost care of which they were capable.

Monday morning the School-house Custodian called on the master and asked whether there was any criticism as to the condition of the building. There was — plenty. The master pointed out or attempted to point out in great detail the grounds for his complaint, but, alas, he met with little sympathy.

Before leaving the building the School-house Custodian told the janitor all that had taken place, and assured him that he need expect no further

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complaint on the part of the master. The janitor expressed pleasure on hearing this glad news and said, "Begorra, I swept the floors again this very morning before the old man came in." This well-cared for building had been swept five times since the preceding Friday.

This same master frequently complained of the "frigidity" of his office. During a call made on him by the School-house Custodian he renewed his complaint. The Custodian consulted the thermometer and remarked that the temperature was 66 degrees. The master put on his spectacles, went over to the thermometer, read it carefully, and commented, "Why its only 65½ degrees, Mr. Mulvey." Some men are hard to please.

Beginning in 1916 the custodians became eligible for a totally inadequate pension of \$360 per annum, after many years of service. They are now included in the general retirement system applicable to all city employees, under which they may receive a substantial retirement allowance based upon their length of service, their compensation, and their own contributions.

Formerly the compensation of janitors was not established in accordance with any very definite plan. When a new building was ready for occupancy, it was looked over by one or more members of the Committee in charge of the janitor force, and by an assistant to the Auditing Clerk, and com-

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pared as to size, capacity and amount of work required to take care of it, with other and similar buildings. The salary of the janitor was then fixed at a rate a little more, a little less, or exactly agreeing with other buildings of similar size and type. Naturally considerable irregularities resulted. Some janitors were overpaid and some were underpaid. In 1912 a general schedule intended to equalize the compensation of janitors was adopted, and subsequently from time to time modified and improved, until at the present time the schedule in effect is regarded as practically entirely satisfactory to all concerned. It has been largely imitated and copied in other cities throughout the country. This schedule is based upon five factors, namely: cleaning; heating, ventilation and superintendence; washing of windows; care of yards and sidewalks; and care of lawns. Each new building is carefully measured, the schedule rate of compensation for each factor applied, and the result is that the custodian of every building receives exactly the same compensation that he would receive in any other building for doing the same amount of work. From time to time as the compensation of the custodian force generally has been increased, the rates paid for one or more of the factors upon which the schedule rests are increased, and therefore any advance in compensation affects all custodians alike.

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Whenever a vacancy occurs in the custodianship of any building, the custodians in charge of buildings paying a lower rate are notified and given opportunity to apply for transfer or promotion to the vacancy. The names of applicants are arranged in the order of their standing as determined by various markings given by their principals and by the School-house Custodian, sufficient weight being given to successful past experience so that there is a preference in favor of seniority of service. Thus, as new men are employed, they are steadily advanced to more important buildings and consequent increase of compensation, and are thus rewarded for good behavior and efficiency.



AMOS M. LEONARD
JAMES W. WEBSTER
ALONZO G. HAM

E. FRANK WOOD
SAMUEL W. MASON
JAMES F. BLACKINTON

ROBERT C. METCALF
LEANDER WATERMAN
ELBRIDGE SMITH

CHAPTER XIII

TRUANT AND ATTENDANCE OFFICERS

THE truant officer, now the attendance officer, is a long standing adjunct to the school system. He pursues the truant to his lair — if a truant has a lair — and conveys him triumphantly to the school which he has neglected to attend. In former years the truant officer was, perhaps, to some extent regarded as the foe of the reluctant pupil, although the officer never really deserved to be so considered. The attendance officer of recent years has more and more come to be considered as an important social agency and less of a policeman. The weapons upon which he relies have increasingly become those of argument and persuasion rather than of force and prosecution. He is the friend rather than the adversary of the pupil. He invokes his legal powers with the greatest reluctance and only after it has become plainly evident that no other course will be of avail. He has practically a personal acquaintance with all the children of school age in his district. He knows them and he knows many of their parents. He calls at their homes outside of working

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hours and exercises a friendly and helpful influence as need arises. In times of industrial unemployment he is the means by which substantial help is given to the needy. Unobtrusively and privately he sees that clothes and shoes, for example, are provided when necessary. In one section of the city where those least prosperous congregate, there is a business man from whom the attendance officer at any time can obtain the means to provide shoes or other clothing for a child who would otherwise be unable to attend school. Nothing official is known about this situation, nothing is said; and more recently and happily there has been but little occasion for such assistance. But it has been different in the past, and it may be different in the future. Here and elsewhere throughout the city the attendance officer is a helpful and useful instrument in the social life of the community.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PUPIL AND THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

TWENTY-FIVE years ago, the pupil was supposed to fit into the school system. If he did not fit, so much the worse for the pupil. The system pursued its course undisturbed. There were a few standard educational prescriptions which were handed out to all comers alike. Most of the patients, owing perhaps to the school age law, lived through the grammar school period, but in the high schools the mortality was alarming, especially in the first year of the course — while few died, many resigned. In those days, as at the present time, there were many “motor-minded” boys (they were then not known under that name), and they motored away from school as soon and as quickly as the law permitted, and sought refuge in employment of one kind or another. There was an occasional boy who “loved his books, who loved his school, and who loved his teacher, too,” but he was a bird with rare plumage. Such pupils were academic-minded, but they were few and far between. But a radical and fundamental change was impending. It became

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more and more evident that every pupil was entitled to an equal chance, and that the schools were not conducted for the benefit of the few, but for the many. Recognition of the rights of the mass as against class steadily increased.

The "motor-minded" boy of today in the schools who does not take kindly to books, but who wants to do something with his hands, finds ample opportunity to develop his mechanical leanings. He sets type and operates a printing press; he makes tools and uses them; he makes articles of furniture; he makes some progress in electrical engineering; in the Boston Trade School and in the Mechanic Arts High School he operates more complicated mechanical apparatus. In the former school and in one of the high schools he takes automobiles apart and puts them together again; he repairs and puts into running condition other motor cars that from time to time he has an opportunity to rejuvenate. He gets a start, and often a very substantial start, on the road that leads to success as a foreman or superintendent of construction. He learns to construct a ventilating system, or to erect a cornice for a building; he learns to build houses and furniture; to wire a room, or to manipulate an electrical switchboard.

He may also take up various building trades, including masonry; he is also given instruction in a machine shop and in printing.

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His sister who in the early days of the public schools was taught plain sewing, made underwear, and sometimes a graduation dress, has likewise gained in opportunity. In the Trade School for Girls she designs, makes, and also even sells to satisfied customers, who welcome the opportunity to purchase at substantial prices the products of her skill and taste. Her handiwork includes gowns, wraps, and millinery. She learns power machine operating. She executes in black and white and in water color attractive designs for female wearing apparel, and charming little sketches of human figures, of animals, and landscapes. She designs posters and calendars and covers for books, and otherwise expresses her artistic taste. In this school, and to a much larger degree in the High School of Practical Arts, she learns how to manage a home, how to cook, and how to serve an appetizing meal. She learns food values and can figure with precision the cost of feeding a family. Her instruction is not altogether in a classroom, but is partly given in a model flat or apartment. There she sweeps, dusts, makes beds, and is otherwise prepared for her possible future duties as wife and mother. If her ambition leads her in the direction of office work, she may spend one or several years in a clerical school where she may pursue courses fitting her for clerical or secretarial work.

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The gap so long deplored between the grammar or elementary and the high school now has a substantial bridge, adequate to accommodate the traffic that increasingly pours over it. The number of high school pupils has enormously increased. The mortality has substantially decreased. The intermediate school has been established; its ends are being more closely connected with the elementary school and with the high school. The old sharp distinction between the elementary and the high school is fading. The twelve-grade plan with stations along the road where passengers disembark, as their age and ability to continue their journey control, is rapidly approaching.

The system continually reaches out to give additional service to its stockholders. It extends its helping hand to the foreign-born mother who speaks the English language not at all or very poorly, who has found it difficult, if not impossible, to adjust herself to her new environment, and becomes unhappily conscious that her own children regard her with mortification and disapproval. The Day School for Immigrants is established. It holds its classes here and there throughout the city, usually not in regular school buildings, but where groups of shy and timid mothers of foreign nationality gladly assemble with others of their own age, condition, and circumstances, and are taught

to express themselves with added fluency in the English language and to acquaint themselves with American ways.

The underfed and anæmic child *buys* (the cost is trifling) a simple but reasonably substantial lunch during the mid-morning session. The child of tubercular tendencies does not spend his school time in an ordinary classroom. He pursues his studies in an open-air room. He is closely watched and guarded by competent physicians and nurses. His health improves. He gains in weight; if he does not, the cause is sought and the remedy applied or suggested to his family. Each school is visited daily by a school physician to whom is reported any suspicious case of ill health or apparent physical breakdown. He advises, but does not prescribe. He has the assistance of a school nurse who sees, or endeavors to see, that the school physician's recommendations are carried into effect by the pupil or by his parents. The school nurse calls as frequently as may be necessary at the homes of children who are sick, with proper avoidance and precaution against the spread of communicable diseases. It is found that some stupid pupils are not stupid at all, but that their eyesight or hearing is defective. Suitable glasses are suggested and, if need be, the means are provided, although not from school appropriations, to meet the

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necessary cost. Every child is given a thorough physical examination at least once a year. If his teeth need attention, he is taken by the school nurse to the Forsyth Dental Infirmary or to some other agency where his needs are attended to at a trifling expense or at no expense at all.

If he fails in his course in one or two studies during a school year, he has an opportunity to make up his deficiency in a summer review school and to rejoin his class in the fall or to be graduated without the loss of a year's time.

If it is discovered that he has some taste or inclination for music, his opportunity in that direction is no longer limited to the mere singing of songs. He may become a member of a school orchestra and a performer in a concert to which admission is widely sought and attendance greatly enjoyed by lovers of good music. In the annual parade of the school cadets there are no longer hired bands. Cadets pass through the streets to the music of their own bands, and very creditable those bands are. The system appreciates that in the future as in the past there will be musicians and artists and craftsmen, as well as doctors and lawyers and business men, and it starts them along their road. It realizes also that there will be salesmen and saleswomen, shopkeepers and merchants. It arranges, therefore, for the employment of pupils during vacation periods, at Christ-

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mas time and during the summer, so that while they are still in school they may obtain experience in business houses, and be paid for their services while so engaged. It conducts a department of vocational guidance which does not say "you shall be this" or "you shall be that," but seeks to place the square peg in the square hole, to decrease the number of "blind alley jobs," and to open the way to useful and profitable future business life. It receives in the continuation school for four hours a week boys and girls already employed, and endeavors to help them to prepare themselves for better and more remunerative service.

It teaches arithmetic in the manual training shops and classes differently from the way in which it is taught in other classes. It makes arithmetical problems practical, and the pupil sees the practical advantages and necessity of arithmetical operations in a concrete way.

The system employs teacher coaches; it conducts playgrounds and outdoor games and sports. It does not aim to make individual stars in football, baseball or on the running track for example, but rather to encourage teamwork and universal participation in such activities.

School buildings are not idle and uninhabited outside of school hours. They are occupied evenings by parents' associations, by meetings of

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civic or other improvement associations, for entertainments of various kinds, for political rallies, for all sorts of purposes in which the community is interested. Part of the expense is borne by the School Committee and part is assumed by those to whom the use of such accommodations is allowed.

All these and many other things which the public schools do to justify their existence and to warrant the large expense which their conduct involves, are taken largely as a matter of course. But how sharp the contrast between the present and the past over a period of but twenty-five years. One significant statement must close this brief and altogether superficial reference to what has been done during the period referred to. It is this: There is never any retrogression in the school system; there may be and there is from time to time opposition, although it is rare, to some new activity that the system undertakes to put into effect. There are occasional sarcastic references to "fads and fancies," but never is heard from any responsible quarter a definite suggestion or recommendation that some particular subject or activity be discontinued. There is sometimes healthy criticism as to the manner in which it is conducted, and such criticism, if made in good faith, is given respectful and careful consideration by the School Committee. The

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result may be and often is substantial improvement in some particular direction, but never is an attack made upon any activity which the school system conducts that is not immediately met by widespread, substantial, and vigorous opposition, and that from outside of the school service.

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CHAPTER XV

APPROPRIATIONS AND EXPENDITURES

THE School Committee is not created to save, but to spend money. It is not expected to curtail its activities, to contract, but rather to expand within the limits of its appropriations, and to see mainly that it exercises a reasonable degree of economy, is not extravagant, and gets the worth of its money.

In its financial care-free days the School Committee went gaily on its way. It asked not the Lord, but the City Council, to provide; and the City Council always "came across." If it threatened not to do so, the School Committee threatened to close the schools, and no City Council was willing to shoulder such a responsibility.

At a still earlier date the mayor was a member and chairman of the School Committee. One wonders what mayors did in those days. Did they, as chairmen of the School Committee, apply to the City Council for more money to run the schools, did they then as mayors oppose such applications? Such a dilemma was well expressed

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by the Lord Chancellor in "Iolanthe," who plaintively inquired whether he would be justified in appearing before himself in his own court for permission to marry his own ward. He remarked mournfully "it is indeed painful to sit upon a wool-sack stuffed with such thorns as these." Former mayors must have experienced similar difficulties.

This situation was cured in 1898 by legislation which divorced the finances of the School Committee absolutely from other city departments, authorized it to make definite appropriations based on the valuation of the city, and required it to live within these appropriations. There was no longer any help in Israel, nor in the City Council. The School Committee rose to the occasion and has since managed to avoid deficits and to "balance its budget," a term of mystery to the non-financial mind. It has, of course, from time to time been obliged to seek, and often has received, authority to enlarge its appropriations to meet the constantly increasing cost of the public schools.

CHAPTER XVI

SUPPLIES AND INCIDENTALS

YEARS ago purchases of the many articles which the school system uses were made in rather haphazard fashion. Competitive bids in the way they are now secured were comparatively unknown, but the genial old auditing clerk — purchasing agent — business agent — superintendent of janitors — delighted to pit one bidder against another, and to use his own native shrewdness and wit to secure the best possible terms for the city. Paper was tested by taking a sheet and tearing it by hand, and its strength determined in this casual way. The specifications for coal required it to be of “good quality” and equal to the product of some named mine. In those days, of course, “fireproof” coal was unknown, or at least did not reach this market in sufficient amounts to attract attention. Nothing but anthracite was bought, and the use of bituminous came only after an arduous struggle. The coal was weighed by the dealer, and some attaché of the office was sent to verify the scale weights at the dealer’s yard, and his report was accepted.

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Now all coal is weighed by the City Sealer of Weights and Measures.

Representatives of various business houses from whom purchases were made delighted to match their wits with the auditing clerk, whose ways were pretty well known. For example, perhaps he contemplated the purchase of some scissors. He would obtain a price from one dealer and then attempt to secure a lower price from a rival. Quite frankly he would tell each the bid of the other, and, finally, when his mind was about made up from whom to make the purchase, the trade would be made something in this way. The seller would quote a price, say of \$1.50 a dozen. "I'll give a dollar thirty-five." Inasmuch as the seller was pretty well acquainted with the method pursued, he probably got about what he expected and would have been willing to have quoted in the first place.

A master would call with a request to be furnished with a certain quantity of paper or pencils. The wary ones asked for about double the quantity they really expected to get, and their expectations were usually fulfilled. The more insistent and aggressive masters were not only well supplied, but frequently oversupplied and accumulated surplus stocks against a day of need. The less insistent were sometimes obliged to get along with less than their needs actually required.

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Today all this is changed. Sealed bids for practically all articles purchased are invited from as many sources as possible. They are opened at an appointed time and the contract is awarded usually, but not necessarily, to the lowest responsible bidder, and in accordance with the judgment of the business agent supported by expert and disinterested examination of samples, and chemical or other analysis. The specifications for coal are based upon the amount of heat which the fuel will produce, or as it is commonly called, the number of British thermal units it contains. The maximum amounts of sulphur, ash, and other impurities which will be allowed are also specified. The coal delivered is subjected to chemical analysis, its grade determined, and if its quality exceeds the specifications, the contract price is correspondingly increased. If below the specifications, it is penalized by an adequate reduction of the contract price.

The quality of the paper furnished is determined by similar means. If it falls below the contract requirements, either it is rejected, or the price paid for it is correspondingly reduced.

The physical training department requires a number of baseballs. How the ball is to be constructed is carefully described. Deliveries are made. One or more samples are taken and cut in halves, and there is no uncertainty whether the



FRANK F. PREBLE
HENRY B. MINER
WILLIAM E. ENDICOTT

EDWIN T. HORNE
EDWARD M. LANCASTER
HENRY C. HARDON

DANIEL W. JONES
GEORGE W. M. HALL
GRANVILLE B. PUTNAM

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requirements of the contract have been observed. Pens, ink, ink powders, pencils, mucilage, and the thousand and one different articles that are purchased are so far as possible standardized. If, as sometimes happens, it is found that the standard established is too low to give satisfactory service, it is raised. Whatever quality is adopted is for the entire system. What is furnished one school is furnished all schools of the same grade alike.

A per capita basis determines the quantity of supplies furnished to every school. There are elaborate tables which specify how much paper, how many pencils, how many pens, and how many other articles shall be supplied for a given number of pupils. Thus, an increase in the number of pupils automatically increases correspondingly the quantity of supplies. A decrease in the number of pupils accomplishes the opposite result. All schools are on an equality and the variations in this respect which resulted from the old system or lack of system have ended.

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CHAPTER XVII

THE REORGANIZATION OF 1906

IN 1905 the School Committee consisted of twenty-four members elected at large for three-year terms, an organization that began in 1885. From 1875 to 1885, the mayor was also a member of the School Committee, so that the total number was twenty-five. From 1854 to 1875 the number varied from seventy-four to one hundred sixteen.

For some time the Committee had been the target of unfriendly criticism. Its members did not always work in complete harmony with one another. Most of the business of the Board, including matters of major as well as of minor importance, was practically decided upon by subcommittees which usually consisted of five members, and the Board, as a whole, frequently found it difficult and sometimes impossible to obtain sufficient knowledge of a proposition to justify intelligent action thereon.

In that year (1905) a number of citizens deeply interested in public school affairs, some of whom were then members of the Committee itself or had

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previously served thereon, joined in a movement, which was headed by James J. Storrow, to reorganize the Committee and decrease the number of its members. This effort, despite much opposition and acrimonious criticism, was finally successful. Under the new legislation the powers of the new Committee were substantially identical with those of the old. One new and important position was created, — that of Business Agent, an office that has steadily grown in value and importance and has been conducted by the present incumbent for many years with marked efficiency and unquestioned integrity.

The old Committee went out of office at a meeting notable for its lack of harmony. The Superintendent, George H. Conley, who had been bitterly attacked at the final meeting and who had in July, 1904, defeated in a contest for that office his predecessor, Edwin P. Seaver, died unexpectedly and without any previous warning only a few weeks before the new Board came into control.

The new Board was composed of George E. Brock, a savings bank official who had previously served on the former Board; David A. Ellis, an attorney who was a member of the old Board; Thomas J. Kenny, an attorney who had also served on the old Board; William S. Kenny, a business man of East Boston who had had similar

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service; and James J. Storrow, a banker who had likewise served on a previous Board. Mr. Storrow became the chairman of the Board, with no opposition.

At once the Board was faced with the necessity of electing a new Superintendent. But two candidates received serious consideration. One was Jeremiah E. Burke, who had for several years been a member of the Board of Supervisors and who now holds the position to which he then aspired. The other candidate was Stratton D. Brooks, who had recently resigned from the Board of Supervisors to accept the superintendency of public schools in Cleveland, Ohio. Both of these gentlemen were held in high regard by every member of the Board. The choice, after some delay and friendly rivalry conducted both by the candidates and by the members of the Board with absolute courtesy and fairness and without arousing any bitterness or ill will, finally fell upon Mr. Brooks, who promptly resigned the position he then held and entered upon his new duties the latter part of March.

The Board had in view the adoption of measures of substantial importance intended to improve the efficiency of the system as a whole, to centralize authority, to unify and co-ordinate different intimately related branches of the system and to improve conditions in the teaching staff.

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The new Board and the new Superintendent were in complete harmony. Almost daily meetings were held which were frequently long continued. The finances of the Board were given particular attention and its expenditures carefully examined and regulated. Among the more important measures which the new Board undertook and carried into effect, some of which involved legislative action, were these:

Authority to make an additional appropriation for the general support of the system and to decrease correspondingly the amount to be expended for repairs and alterations.

Various measures of economy, viz.: Less expensive methods of printing; reduction of cost of gas and electricity; giving up of unnecessary rented quarters; reducing number of superfluous teachers; discontinuance of the old segregation of grammar schools according to geographical divisions of the city, which remedied to a large extent the overcrowding of a school in one district while there were vacant seats in another.

A revision of the general rules and regulations of the Board in which the direct authority of the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, principals and other executive officials was increased, and a chain of responsibility established whereby teachers were responsible to principals, principals to Assistant Superintendents, Assistant Super-

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intendents to the Superintendent, and finally the Superintendent to the Board.

The adoption of a civil service system governing the appointment of teachers, the establishment of suitable eligible lists, and the making of appointments in accordance with the standing of candidates upon such lists.

The establishment of promotional examinations, with the aim of making advancement in position and salary dependent upon success in teaching.

The adoption of a plan under which leaves of absence to study and travel or for rest were granted on practically half pay for a period not exceeding one year.

The establishment of a pension system applicable to the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, teachers and members of the supervising staff.

The establishment of a High School of Commerce.

A reduction in the grammar school course from nine to eight years.

Securing, with the aid of the mayor, legislation establishing the Juvenile Court.

Appointment of a Supervisor of Substitutes.

Securing the passage of an Act enlarging the powers of the Committee in respect of physical education, and authorizing it to organize and conduct physical training and exercises, athletics, sports, games, and play upon school premises and

elsewhere, and providing funds to meet this additional expense.

Securing an Act authorizing the appointment of a supervising nurse and a corps of school nurses to serve in the various schools.

Establishing the Girls' High School of Practical Arts.

Securing legislation authorizing a substantial increase in school appropriations.

A progressive decrease in the quota of pupils assigned to teachers in the elementary schools.

These were some of the more important accomplishments during the first two or three years of the new Board. Other changes, additions and improvements followed in due course and have continued practically uninterrupted up to the present time. To state them in detail would far exceed the limits herein available for that purpose.

That the new Board with its reduced membership has been far more efficient and effective than the former and larger Board is unquestionable. The system is now one that conducts its affairs in accordance not only with statutory, but with its own laws. It does not make exceptions to rules for the benefit of individuals. It plays no favorites. Efficiency is recognized and meets with due reward. The standards required to be met by candidates for appointment to the teaching staff are gradually raised. In one sense, the system is

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strictly impersonal; in another, it is personal to the highest possible degree; that is to say, it aims to meet the needs of each individual pupil and to see so far as it may that every boy and every girl in the school system has an equal chance.

The School Committee itself never loses sight of the fact that matters to which its attention is directed, which may seem trivial and worth but little attention, are really of the very greatest importance to individuals for whose benefit the school system is conducted, and it insists that its own employees shall always take this point of view. The problem that perplexes an individual parent may profoundly affect the future of his children, and neglect of or inattention to trifling questions are too likely to result in a life failure that sympathetic consideration might have turned into a success.

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CHAPTER XVIII

CITY HALL v. SCHOOL COMMITTEE

THE relationship between City Hall and the School Committee, or in other words, between the mayor and the School Committee, has varied from time to time. The present administration has been friendly and co-operative. Past administrations have sometimes been cordial, sometimes passive, and, very rarely, hostile. Some mayors have attempted what the School Committee considered to be unwarranted interference in the administration of the schools, and such effort has always met with prompt and vigorous opposition. Occasionally in the past a mayor has manifested a disposition to exercise a control, especially over the expenditure of money by the School Committee, that the Committee felt far transcended his powers. Usually, however, a mayor is content to allow the Committee to expend its appropriations according to its own ideas. Its annual appropriation order and budget and other orders involving the expenditure of money are submitted to him for ap-

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proval. He has a veto power, which, however, may be overcome by the votes of four members of the Committee. This veto power is rarely exercised.

Whenever the School Committee seeks authority to increase its appropriations, the mayor very properly becomes interested and concerned. Usually he is consulted by the Committee. The reasons for its application are clearly placed before him and his support is invited. Sometimes it is obtained, and sometimes he feels constrained to exercise a more or less active opposition.

In recent years the Committee has necessarily been obliged to reckon with another body — the Finance Commission. As an ally that Commission is of great value; as an opponent it is not to be despised.

The duties, responsibilities, and purposes of those who direct our political fortunes change abruptly from time to time. In one year a man may be chairman of the School Committee, and, as such, advocate before the Legislature larger school appropriations. He satisfies himself that there is sound and substantial reason for making such an application, and he supports it with all the power and eloquence at his command. Later he may become chairman of the Finance Commission, and thus occupy an entirely different position. He no longer has a client whose

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cause is just and whose interests must be zealously protected; but he has before him a petitioner and he must pass upon the merits of the petition. The scene has shifted, and the attorney has become a judge.

It has been indeed fortunate that the present chairman and also a former official of the Finance Commission had long experience upon the School Committee and thus acquired a thorough acquaintance with the operation of the school system.

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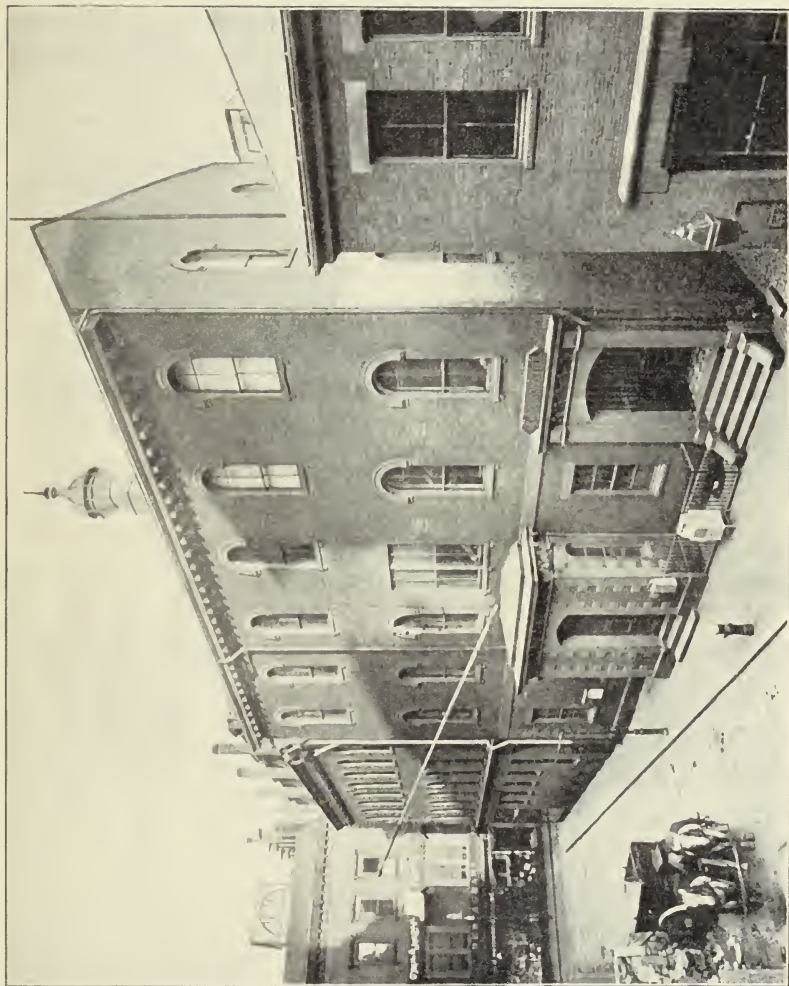
CHAPTER XIX

MASON STREET AND THE NEW ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

THE headquarters of the School Committee for many years was commonly called "Mason Street." The Committee occupied an old and dingy building on that street, entirely inadequate and unsuitable for its purpose, which visitors from other cities regarded with surprise, and those who occupied it, with resignation and disapproval.

For many years efforts to obtain better and more commodious quarters met with failure, sometimes for one reason, sometimes for another. It seemed almost as though if it should perchance happen in the future that the school system should dissolve into its original elements and be no more, the School Committee would remain on Mason Street much in the position of Marius surveying the ruins of Carthage.

Yet in the past attempts were made to deprive the Committee even of these poor quarters. On one occasion years ago it was notified by the mayor to move, quit, get out, and repair to City Hall. The School Committee stood by its guns;



OLD SCHOOL COMMITTEE HEADQUARTERS ON MASON STREET

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that is, it would have so stood, if it had had any guns; not having them it simply declined to move and hoisted the banner of revolt.

On Mason Street it held the fort until the current year when it removed to new, commodious, and convenient quarters at 15 Beacon Street, in which it now comfortably conducts its affairs.

How long will it there remain? No one without the gift of prophecy can tell. Tennyson wrote of a brook that goes on forever. In the history of Boston the School Committee sprung from an early source. Empires and kingdoms may decay, civilization may vanish; no one can tell what the future may bring forth, but one may call to mind what was said of Rome.

"While Rome stands, the world stands,
When Rome falls, the world falls."

The Boston School Committee, strong in Boston tradition, fervent in spirit, perhaps not always serving the Lord, but certainly serving the community and serving it well, will doubtless continue to exist as long as Boston exists.

CHAPTER XX

A POPULAR CONSPIRACY AGAINST THE SCHOOLS

THERE is a general impression that a calendar year contains a little more than three hundred and sixty-five days, although Voliva, who insists that the earth is flat, may have a different opinion. In the ordinary school year there are usually about one hundred and eighty school days; or, in other words, a pupil is in school only about half a year. It is freely admitted that the years which are usually spent in a school system are short in number and that they pass altogether too swiftly. Any break or interruption of the time which a pupil may spend in school is to be deplored. It creates a loss which probably can never be fully made up. Yet there is constant pressure from many directions still further to reduce the number of school days. Well-meaning, patriotic, and other right thinking citizens are too apt to urge the observance of special days and exercises, and the dismissal of the schools for various purposes not directly allied to education. Effort is made to close the schools or to hold special exercises for Mothers' Day, Arbor Day, Humane Day, Battle

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of the Marne Day, Lafayette Day, Armistice Day, Health Day, and one enthusiast even proposed the observance of Butterfly Day and apparently circularized school authorities generally for that purpose. No one has yet suggested the observance of Fathers' Day, yet father has to pay the bills. Those who advocate closing the schools and adding to the number of holidays, which are now pretty numerous and sprinkled quite liberally throughout the school year, fail to appreciate that while they wish to confer a benefit upon the pupils, they are really doing just the opposite, and depriving their own children of an opportunity which they should be allowed to enjoy with as few interruptions as possible.

Such suspension of the Boston school system for a single day means the expenditure of approximately \$63,000 without any return.

CHAPTER XXI

THE EDUCATIONAL LANGUAGE

THE educator has to a considerable extent a language all his own. He does not ask your opinion, he comes in to get your "reaction," but does not want you to be a reactionary. He prefers to use a long rather than a short word, with one notable exception.

He does not omit, strike out, or cut out. He "eliminates." He is especially fond of the word "content," but he does not mean that he is contented, particularly so far as salary is concerned. He is frequently extremely discontented in this respect, and sometimes he is discontented with the apparent failure of his superiors adequately to recognize honest merit. He holds one word in high esteem in recent years. The word is "job." Almost everything is a job. He assists his pupils to get jobs. A job is to run a school. Another is to teach a subject. Sometimes it is to get an increase in salary. This is a job that is cheerfully undertaken at all times. If he gets it, he does not get his pay raised, but he gets an "increment." He does not go up on the salary schedule by suc-

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cessive steps, but by increments. The word is now in high favor, and has even got into the official records of the Board, displacing "annual increase."

There is another word which the educator favors to a large extent — "evaluate." The dictionary tells us that this word means "to rate" or "to appraise," but the educator does not especially care for words of one or two syllables, one containing four better expresses his meaning.

We must not overlook two choice morsels — "motivate" and "motivated." What do they really mean?

If any part of this partakes of the nature of criticism, it should be constructive. It is therefore suggested to teachers and other educators that they urge their pupils to "elucidate" rather than to "explain."

CHAPTER XXII

KEEPING THE SCHOOLS OUT OF POLITICS

IT has been many years since the schools were in politics, if indeed they ever were to any extent. For a long time the more astute politicians have realized that little or nothing is to be gained by meddling with school affairs. There are no spoils to reward such efforts. No political or personal influence is of avail in affecting the employment of teachers. Attendance officers, custodians, and practically all other persons employed in the school service are subject to civil service regulations. Here and there there may be a stray and unimportant position not included in the classified service, but these are of no consequence and not worth much attention by outsiders.

However, no self-respecting political campaign can be conducted without one or more issues. If the voters are inarticulate, issues must be provided for them. Usually it is pretty hard to find a worth-while issue for a School Committee campaign. In such years one and sometimes all

candidates will adopt as a battle cry, "Keep the schools out of politics." There never seems to be any definite intention on anybody's part to put the schools into politics, but an issue is framed.

There have been times in the past when active and energetic mayors have experienced a call to add to their otherwise onerous duties the additional responsibility of regulating, to some extent at least, the public school system; but usually a mayor contents himself with looking after "City Hall," and shows but little disposition to trespass upon the domain of the School Committee. Whenever he does the School Committee, if permitted, is more than likely to stand upon its rights and to resent unwarranted interference.

At any rate, the community has become so accustomed for many years to the conduct of its schools under wise and disinterested guidance it is probable that any serious or concerted attempt to make them subject to considerations of political expediency would meet with prompt and effective resistance. An unpaid School Committee offers few attractions for "deserving Democrats" or "meritorious Republicans," but it does afford ample opportunity for useful political service.

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CHAPTER XXIII

SCHOOL COMMITTEE ALWAYS STRONG FOR DISCIPLINE

BEFORE the days of Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, or Supervisors the School Committee members themselves made frequent visits to ascertain the manner in which the schools under their charge were conducted. It would appear from the old reports that these committees took such matters very seriously, but an occasional report is illuminated by a touch of humor.

On February 26, 1844, a sub-committee reported on the primary school on the Mill Dam Road, erected in 1831, the first Boston primary school building, and probably the first of its kind built in the United States. This was also the first school attended by James A. Page, for fifty-five years the beloved and respected master of the Dwight Grammar School on West Springfield street.

The Committee made the following report of their visit: —

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To the Standing Committee of Primary Schools.

The Sub Committee requested to examine the Mill Dam School for the month of February respectfully report,

That they proceeded in the execution of the duty assigned them on Thursday the 22d inst. The weather was remarkably pleasant, but they found it no small task to travel two or three miles through mud and water & against a strong breeze. But who could fail to be patriotic on the birth-day of the "father of his country"? They would also express their gratitude to the Boston & Roxbury Mill Dam Corporation, who kindly remitted the usual toll for foot passengers, as soon as the nature of their mission was made known to them.

Though "Long and dreary was the road to pass" they arrived about 3 O'clock, at the appointed place. From some intimations given them by previous visitors, they were somewhat prepared to find a want of order and discipline in this school. Your Committee feel bound to state that no irregularity of the kind came to their notice, but on the contrary a remarkable degree of stillness seemed to pervade the room and its vicinity. In one word they saw *nothing* in the school with which to find fault. Perhaps it should in justice be stated that they found "*no school*," the teacher having dismissed for the afternoon on account of the illness of a relative in the City.

The Sub Committee had no alternative but to "homeward plod their weary way" and ask of the Committee the acceptance of the will for the deed, and to request to be discharged from farther action in the premises till the duty shall again be assigned them in regular order.

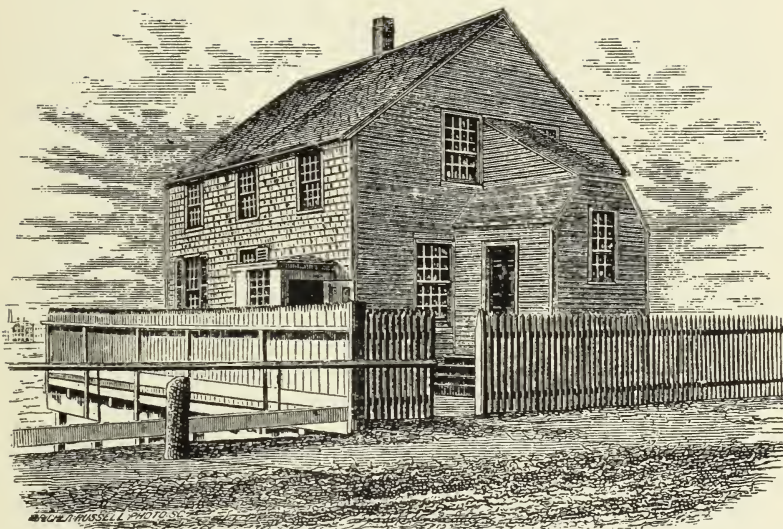
Respectfully submitted,
ALVAN SIMONDS for himself
& W. P. JARVIS

BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CHAPTER XXIV

HELPING HANDS

SCHOOL Committees have to deal with their friends and well-wishers as well as with others who are in a more critical frame of mind. Practically every person in the community is deeply interested in the public schools, except, perhaps, in lesser degree, the young and frivolous, bachelors and spinsters, and the aged. Most of them wish the School Committee well, and all of them are friendly to the public schools although once in a while they may find occasion to carp, and when they feel like carping they carp. The plain people as well as the highbrows are in favor of continuing the public schools; they would no more think of going without them than they would think of closing the churches, although some of them do not go to church. They regard the school system not as a necessary evil, but, on the whole, as something extremely useful and contributing materially to their comfort and peace of mind. They are always ready to pay the necessary bills, provided they feel sure that they



PRIMARY SCHOOL, MILLDAM.

Erected, 1831.

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are getting their money's worth; they rarely complain of the expense.

They rely upon the public schools to do for them many things that they are entirely unable to do for themselves. If a parent, or even a pair of parents, has a child who is found to be getting rather out of hand, he is cheerfully turned over to the public schools in the hope that he will be started on the road to useful citizenship and encouraged at least to respect his parents and to behave himself at home.

From time to time parents and other friends of the public schools, anonymously favor the Committee with suggestions of varying value. There is a pleasing diversity of opinion as to many different details connected with public school administration.

Take, for example, the matter of closing the schools in stormy weather. Many parents, properly solicitous as to the health of their children, believe that the policy in this respect should be liberal, that it should be followed in the case of even moderate storms. Others believe that only in case of a blizzard should the schools be closed. Whenever the schools are closed for this reason, thousands of children, who would be better off in school or at home, are loose on the streets.

Successive School Committees have given this question frequent and attentive consideration.

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At one time the plan was tried of allowing each master to decide for his own school whether or not it should be closed because of rain or snow. Boston, geographically, covers considerable territory, and at least on one occasion when a shower fell in South Boston, the schools, or some of them, closed with a bang; while out in West Roxbury, to which the shower did not extend, and in other suburbs, the schools continued in session. This plan was soon given up as entirely unworkable.

The authority to close the schools now rests wholly with the Superintendent, who has his difficulties in dealing with the matter. He is called upon to rouse himself at an unseemly early hour in the morning (no Superintendent should be obliged to get up early in the morning because he has probably been out late the night before; don't misunderstand — he has been attending a parents' meeting or an alumni reunion, or some educational meeting or function, and is entitled to his morning's repose) to decide or guess whether the weather for that day is likely to be bad enough to warrant closing the schools. Not being a weather prophet, he sometimes guesses right and sometimes guesses wrong. When he guesses wrong, he has an unhappy day, because parents and others make inquiry or comment as to the reason that justified the closing of the schools on a perfectly good day, and such complaints often reach individual mem-

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bers of the Committee, and they also join in the chorus of inquiry.

In a city like Boston, with its large area, it has been extremely difficult, in fact found to be impossible, to put into operation any form of signal that will sufficiently broadcast the information that the schools have been ordered closed. Every possible suggestion has been considered and found wanting, and the practice now is to order the "no school signal" only on especially severe days, and to trust to the good judgment of parents to keep their children at home when they deem it advisable to do so, without regard to whether the school session has or has not been officially suspended.

CHAPTER XXV

FADS AND FANCIES

OCCASIONALLY candidates for the School Committee will adopt as their slogan, "Abolish fads and fancies." There is a certain attractiveness about this cry. It reads well; it sounds well. The great trouble is to find a fad or a fancy in the school system. Some years ago a candidate was elected who undertook to accomplish something in this direction. He was handed a course of study and invited to point out a "fad" or a "fancy" to be decapitated. He approved of the first subject in the course, also the second, likewise the third, and so on until he had become acquainted with the names of all of them. He then asked, "What else is taught?" "Nothing."

He then expressed the opinion that the time devoted to arithmetic should be increased. This was agreed to be highly desirable. He was asked whether he would lengthen the school day or increase the time given to arithmetic by reducing the time given to some other subject. He was

unable to solve this problem to his own satisfaction and finally concluded to let the Superintendent or the Board of Superintendents make revisions to the established courses of study when and to such extent as they thought desirable.

Of course, the teachers of today do not teach as well as those of yesterday. They are not so practical and thorough as they used to be.

"Why, when I was a boy I could —" Thus a successful business man to an Assistant Superintendent, who listened for some time in silence.

Finally the Assistant Superintendent said, "Look here, you think you know what you are talking about, but you don't. I remember you well. You were in my class in the — School about — years ago. Your spelling was original, your arithmetic poor, and your handwriting was an abomination. You think now that you then knew a lot of things that you didn't know. You forget entirely how little you knew when you were in school."

Our wives, of course, do not cook as well as our mothers. Food does not taste the way it used to. But, father had indigestion. We all remember with regret the happy past.

As the old colored preacher said: "The world do move." Do not think it is stationary or moving backward.

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The teacher of today is better trained, better equipped, better supervised, and on the whole more efficient than the teacher of yesterday. Her successor in the future will be better still. The school system certainly does not go backward.

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CHAPTER XXVI

FIRES AND FIRE HAZARD

SHORTLY after the reorganized Committee came into control in 1906, it became much concerned with the possible danger to school pupils because of fires in school buildings. At about that time there had been one or more school-house fires in neighboring towns with loss of life, and the Committee was apprehensive that something of the kind might occur in Boston. It took various steps to reduce the risk and gave the matter much consideration.

Several members of the Committee visited one of the larger suburban high schools. The chairman hunted up the janitor and told him abruptly that the building was on fire.

The janitor stood in doubt, irresolute.

The chairman urged immediate action.

The janitor asked, "Do you want me to show you what I'd do if the building was on fire?"

"Yes, go ahead."

The janitor turned, hurried to the auxiliary fire-alarm box in the building, broke the glass, pulled in the alarm and waited, expectant of commendation.

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The Committeemen hastily resolved themselves into a committee on the reception of visitors, and in a few minutes were welcoming a hurrying delegation from the Fire Department with its appurtenant apparatus eager to rescue life and preserve property.

The janitor always insisted that he did exactly what he was told to do.

The Committee said nothing — officially.

Boston has been singularly fortunate in that so far as can be recalled no child ever lost his life or suffered serious injury in a schoolhouse fire. Several such fires usually occur in the course of a year. They rarely do any substantial damage and usually do not break out when the building is occupied by pupils. Probably among the more important reasons for this fortunate experience are: Most of the buildings, especially the more recent ones, are well planned, well constructed, and have ample corridors and exits; the general so-called fire-proofing of basements; installation of auxiliary fire-alarm boxes; efficient co-operation by the members of the Fire Department in inspection and suggestion; efficiency of custodians; the frequent but irregular practise of well-regulated fire drills which empty even large buildings without confusion in an astonishingly short space of time.

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CHAPTER XXVII

CRITICISM

HELPFUL criticism is always welcome, especially when it shows that the fame of the Boston Public Schools is far flung. This from a foreign shore, Papeete, Tahiti: —

We are told that *Boston* is the seat of learning.

The address on the enclosed envelope speaks for itself:

A citizen of *Boston* a manager of an important department in a large commercial institution in an attempt to address a letter confounds an Island in the Society Group which belongs to France with a group of islands that are at present a dependency of his own Country nor can he properly spell the name Phillipine.

Isn't it up to *Boston* to either adopt better educational methods along the lines of geography and spelling for the benefit of her citizens who may wish to correspond with people who reside beyond the confines of *Boston's* city limits or — in the parlance of American slang — *take down her sign?*

This shows that we should not take too much pride in the way we teach geography and spelling.

Excerpts from reply: —

I am tempted on reading your letter, which interests me, to pose for a moment as a defender of the manager of the

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commercial institution, whose lack of knowledge you may deplore, by taking the offensive rather than the defensive, and making a few comments on your own letter and the envelope which contains it, which I trust you will receive without undue offense. Your envelope is addressed "Boston, U. S. A." You are, of course, aware that there is a Boston in New York state, as well as in Massachusetts, and several other Bostons are scattered over this great and glorious country, and it was only the superior intelligence of the Post Office Department which brought your letter directly to the city for which it was intended.

If it were not for the envelope in which your letter was contained, it would be impossible to determine whom you favor with your communication. Your letter itself is undated, is not addressed to any one, and omits the usual salutation and subscription which, even in benighted Boston, we expect to see appear on business as well as on social communications. Nor does the letter afford any clue to the place of habitation of the writer. For that information, dependence must be placed entirely upon the two envelopes which accompanied it.

There are other comments that might be made upon your letter with respect to punctuation, capitalization, and other trifling matters of that description to which we attach some importance in our schools, and which you appear to regard as of no particular consequence.

I thank you, on behalf of the Chairman, for this expression of your interest in Boston and its affairs, and trust that in your distant home, or place of transient abode, you are upholding the standard of culture, refinement, and knowledge for which this city is so justly celebrated.

From an occasional contributor who favors men teachers:—



EDWIN P. SEEVER
SAMUEL J. BULLOCK
CHARLES W. HILL

JOHN T. GIBSON
HOMER B. SPRAGUE
GEORGE T. LITTLEFIELD

SILAS C. STONE
GEORGE R. MARBLE
SAMUEL HARRINGTON

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A man's personality as a teacher counts. A woman teacher has no personality; therefore, a man teacher should be paid a good deal more. The women teachers with big pay do not marry. They save their money and leave it to universities that have enuff.

Fancy women teachers saving their money to endow universities!

From a warm admirer of the public schools:—

What right have you people to squander the taxpayers' money by this idleness of employees of the city with pay? We cannot understand this unless some pull is brought to bear. The schools should be open the year round and teachers obliged to serve and have three weeks' vacation instead of three months. See the ignoramuses they graduate.

From another who finds poor street car service largely responsible for the tardiness of teachers, and is also opposed to "graft on the Board":—

It seems to me that the School Board, in fact I believe they could amply afford, if they would save on their graft, to send out taxis to convey their teachers to the various schools.

CHAPTER XXVIII

SURVEYORS AND THE SURVEYED

SELF-EXAMINATION is helpful. The examination and criticism of others is sometimes useful. Some years ago the making of what were called "school surveys" was very much in favor. Some city school system wished to be surveyed, or had a survey wished upon it. The surveyors were selected or appointed, and were supposed to be experts in their respective lines. They proceeded to organize and to survey. Sometimes they did the surveying themselves, and sometimes they asked members of the surveyed to do their own surveying and hand over the results to the surveyors. Some of the experts selected were probably selected because they needed the money. They made some curious findings.

Buildings in one city constructed in accordance with certain building laws, with high-class and expensive material, and of first-class construction, were calmly compared, to their great disadvantage, with buildings in another city sometimes incomplete, sometimes not even begun, and usually of a standard of construction inferior to

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that of the building or buildings with which they were compared.

Perhaps the cost of fuel might be under consideration. Comparison would be made without regard to climatic conditions or the distance between the point of production and the point of consumption.

In one instance one of the minor members of the surveying party brought in some figures which an astonished official of the system surveyed was asked to approve or criticise. He looked at the figures doubtfully; they did not look right, but they were bulky and impressive. He was doubtful. He hazarded some questions as to the source of the figures. He indicated one set.

"Where did you get these?"

"From the Commission of Education at Washington."

"Where did he get them?"

"Why he got them from the various cities."

"From school officials?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Where did they get them?"

"Why, from their own records."

"Who made up these records?"

"Their clerks."

"Are all these clerks who made up these records qualified to do so?"

"Why, presumably."

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"Well, your figures may be all right, but remember that all school statistics are not made up by certified public accountants, and are not always absolutely to be relied upon as correct."

The surveyor admitted that he did not have much confidence in his own figures, but, well, he said he needed the money.

Very little of value came from this survey. Some of the recommendations made were adopted to some extent, but nothing very substantial resulted.

Special rooms costing \$150 were cheerfully compared with regular class rooms costing \$7,000 each. A table of costs of school buildings in other cities and in Boston shows figures less than the actual cost recorded by the "Reports of Boards of Education" of those cities. The known costs of Boston schools were blandly compared with the unknown costs of unfinished schools in other cities; several Boston fireproof schools were compared with school-houses in other cities, portions of which had been built for many years and are of composite construction.

As these surveys were sometimes headed by School Superintendents, they were apt to be enthusiastic supporters of the proposition that the Superintendent of Schools should occupy the seat of final, ultimate, and supreme authority in all matters. They were strongly in favor of the one-

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man administration. They admitted that a School Committee might be a necessary evil, but the less power it had, the less damage resulted.

In support of the hypothesis that a superintendent should be administratively supreme imaginary grievances were discovered. It was acknowledged that the individual officers of the School Committee were efficient, but the surveyors thought the difficulty was not with the individual concerned but rather with a cumbersome organization, and deplored that a large proportion of the time and energy of the executive officers must be spent in conference where matters were settled upon a personal basis which ought to be determined by the chief executive officer by virtue of authority vested in him by the School Committee. The surveyors, while admitting that assistant superintendents as individuals are efficient, in their collective capacity as a Board they became "cumbersome" and "should as a board be abolished." However, two of the surveyors did spend twenty minutes in a session with the Board of Superintendents, and doubtless this afforded ample opportunity to arrive at a well-considered estimate of the value of that board and its members.

Some of the members of the surveying parties were very interesting. They were fluent of speech; they were full of ideas; they flitted from place to place; and before they had accomplished

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the ultimate purpose for which they were professedly striving, they flitted to some other field of activity and began anew.

Apropos of nothing, there are some men who are all "front," as are some mansions. You enter a spacious and imposing reception hall, expecting to find beyond a range of large and well-furnished apartments, when, to your surprise, you find yourself with some abruptness in a back yard where nothing grows.

CHAPTER XXIX

EPISODES AND EPISODIC INDIVIDUALS

WHO that knew him can ever forget Harry?

As a teacher he was negligible; as a disciplinarian he was a total loss; as a boon companion of his pupils he was a distinct success. His class would be assembled. The door would slowly open; Harry would cautiously project his head around the corner. Whiz would go a horse chestnut. Harry would dodge and hastily close the door. A moment later it would open again, and Harry, beneath the shelter of his coat drawn over his head, would make a dash through a rain of missiles to the chair of authority and attempt to set the educational machine in operation.

The master of the school would appear.

"What's this?" "What is going on?"

"Just a little playfulness, Mr. —," Harry would reply blandly.

Whenever Harry had occasion to use the black-board he was notably nervous. He had reason to be. He had no eyes in the back of his head, and he was in need of them.

* * *

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When the English High School-house on Montgomery Street was completed and ready for occupancy in 1881, the evening high school was an applicant for admission. This was for several years denied on the ground that evening school pupils could not be expected properly to conduct themselves amid such palatial surroundings. Ultimately, however, that school gained admission and no complaint was made of the manner in which its members behaved.

There were amusing incidents in these early days.

The enterprising principal of the evening high school, learning that a band of Kickapoo Indians was then visiting Boston, invited them to the school, possibly to the graduating exercises. The Indian Braves staged an entertainment in which they sang their Indian songs, danced their Indian dances, and whooped their Indian war whoops. The entertainment was a great success. "A good time was had by all."

Modern school entertainments are tame and spiritless affairs.

From among the teachers in this school emerges the figure of the original "Paul Jones" — once celebrated. Paul undertook to make a trip around the world without money and without price. The start was made in a hotel, or possibly in the rooms of the Boston Press Club. Naked came Paul into the world and naked he began his journey. His

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first clothing consisted of newspapers donated by interested spectators. These he sold as souvenirs until he had accumulated sufficient to buy some more conventional second-hand attire. He started on foot with little, if anything, in the way of money and got a surprising distance from Boston before his courage or his resources failed.

* * *

The evening high school was under the particular charge of a Supervisor whose passion for accuracy exceeded all bounds. He never made a mistake. He gave painful consideration to the marks given pupils on which the receiving of a diploma depended. If a pupil's mark fell a decimal point below the accepted standard, no diploma. There was nothing doing. One evening this Supervisor stood near the door of one of the classrooms, outside of which was a sign indicating that graduates of day grammar schools should register in this room for admission to the evening high school. As each evening school teacher came along the supervisor stopped him and invited his attention to the sign. They glanced at it, nodded an approval and passed on. Finally the Supervisor's patience gave out, and to the next teacher who entered he first directed attention to the sign and then asked in icy tones "How do you spell grammar?" On the sign the spelling was grammer.

At the end of each term of this school there

was invariably a final dinner tendered by the teachers to themselves and attended by all who were sociably inclined and who had the price of admission. Among them were quite a number of young aspirants for professional life. Some of them have risen high in the world. One sits in official robes on the Federal bench; two became presidents of the School Committee; another is an eminent surgeon; still another is a Technology professor; while another is the principal of one of the larger intermediate schools. The annual income of other teachers who are now members of the bar would probably make the compensation that they formerly found almost, if not quite, a necessity in their early days, merely derisive. Another has become one of the higher officials in one of the more important public service corporations in Boston; another gained high distinction as Police Commissioner, and ably and successfully met the assaults of the redoubtable John B. Moran; and doubtless many more have been successful in professional and business life.

Do these men sometimes think of those early days? Probably. Have their young ambitions been realized? Who knows?

These dinners were social affairs enlivened with stories, jokes, and song, and the good fellowship was usually added to among some of the participants, to a limited extent, by liquid refreshments.

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A now-prominent attorney was usually one of the attendants at these banquets. Late in the evening his vocal imitation of a Chinese orchestra could not be excelled, and the felicitous introductions of the various speakers by one of the head masters were gems of wit and eloquence.

One of the most beloved and deeply regretted head masters, who years ago was one of these teachers, at the first dinner he attended rather expected to be called on for a speech. He had not then achieved that experience and aplomb that subsequently distinguished him. During the dinner he engaged in conversation with a table companion, who listened with some surprise to what was being said to him. When the time for speeches arrived, this companion discovered to his amazement that his neighbor had made him the audience at a rehearsal of the speech that was to follow.

* * *

Speaking of those "dear, dead days now gone beyond recall" that is to say, before Volstead was ever heard of, if, indeed, he were alive, one thinks of the dinners which former School Committees once held annually in Faneuil Hall, where both wit and wisdom and "the flowing bowl" supplemented each other, and which were later given up, perhaps for obvious reasons. These dinners, however, possibly may not rest upon anything more substantial than tradition.

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There seems to be no question, however, that in early days what would now be called saloons sometimes occupied the lower floors or the basements of school buildings, and that liquor was sold on school premises, a thing abhorrent to the modern mind.

* * *

A good many years ago there was a public school which had two entrances, each on an adjoining street. Some inquisitive mind discovered that there was a saloon on one of these streets within the sacred limitation of three hundred feet. Curiously enough, public policy had determined that the morals of school pupils would be corrupted if they passed a saloon within three hundred feet on the same street with the school-house. The pupils might turn a corner and pass six saloons in a row on another street without harm, but the limitation on the same street was three hundred feet, and in case of conflict, either the school or the saloon had to go.

In this particular case, one of the prominent members of the Board interested himself in the fortunes of the keeper of the saloon, who was a very respectable and estimable citizen. The Committeeman proposed to a number of his fellow members that one of the doors to the school be closed, but did not disclose the reason for his suggestion. He needed thirteen votes to accom-

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plish his purpose. He pretty nearly got them, but one of the women members of the Board made a personal investigation of the situation, and at the next meeting of the committee caustically inquired "whether a public school was to be closed in order that an honest Scotchman might sell whiskey." The school remained open, but this little incident had far-reaching political effect.

* * *

Several years later a site was selected and the building of a large and very high-class hotel was undertaken. It was a distinct and valuable addition to the city. It still exists and is well and favorably known among the great hotels of the world. It was completed and ready for occupancy when the owner suddenly discovered that it was just within three hundred feet of a public school. In those days it was assumed that no hotel, aside perhaps from family hotels, could be conducted at a profit without the sale of liquor. Tentative suggestions were made for the purchase of the school-house, and a liberal offer was indicated. The School Committee was in a quandary. On the one hand the school was not well located for its purpose; another and better site could easily be found, and the price offered was distinctly attractive, but could the sale be made and the criticism faced that a public school was to be disposed of for such a reason. The Committee,

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especially eight of its members who faced a re-election for the ensuing year, were decidedly of the opinion that it was a chance that had better not be taken, and the school remained undisturbed.

As for the hotel — some ingenious, but legal arrangement was made. The thirsty guest wrote his order; he appointed the waiter his agent; the waiter appointed some one else as his agent, etc., until the final agent reached the source of supply on another street. The order traveled back by the same human chain; the law was satisfied, the thirst of the guest likewise, and all the proprieties were strictly observed. This continued for some years. The school was finally moved, but not for this reason.

* * *

Some individual Committeemen occasionally made substantial contributions to the gaiety of the nation. An architect was engaged and under his supervision was built a large, elaborate, and ornate high school. On its completion the members of the Committee in charge of this enterprise, in company with the architect, made a tour of inspection. One of the Committeemen was a genial and lovable soul and a successful business man, but his education had been neglected.

On arriving at the building he noticed an inscription on its front in a language he did not understand. He asked the architect for an ex-

planation. The architect obligingly translated "Eagles do not catch flies." The Committeeman snorted "Of course, eagles don't catch flies, take it off."

The Committeeman looked again.

"What does the MDXYZ mean?"

The architect replied, "That is the number of the year expressed in Roman numerals."

The Committeeman registered another objection.

"I have no use for your X Y Z's. Put it in plain figures that anybody can read."

The desired changes were made, much to the grief of the architect.

* * *

On another school building the proper spelling of the name of the great English dramatist was the subject of some heated controversy. Were the famous plays written by Shakespeare, or by Shakespere? The architect had one opinion, the members of the Committee had another. Memory does not recall just how the question was settled.

* * *

The naming of school buildings was frequently a matter of interest. In one case, and some concealment is attempted in the hope of avoiding a controversy similar to that which recently attended the renaming of the Michelangelo School, it was agreed that a new school building should be

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named in honor of a certain individual long since dead. A very careful attempt to ensure absolute accuracy was made. All available authorities, biographical and historical, many in number, were consulted, and the proper spelling was decided in accordance with what was properly assumed to be well grounded authority. Shortly afterward it was discovered that the man himself in life had favored another spelling.

* * *

New school buildings of any importance were invariably dedicated. These exercises were important occasions. The friends of the school, the parents of prospective pupils, members of the Committee, and many others gathered in force at the dedicatory exercises. Sometimes these exercises were prolonged and strenuous. On one occasion the principal of the school concerned read a paper, which he had carefully prepared, for one hour and thirty-seven minutes, setting forth his theories on education. He began with the dawn of history and he carried his narrative right down to the present day. The audience listened in helpless resignation. The only person on the platform who had a placid expression was the local clergyman. He had had the first chance with his invocation, and had hopes of getting the last chance with his benediction.

There was a little ceremony that was often



HIRAM M. GEORGE
WILLIAM L. P. BOARDMAN
LEVERETT M. CHASE

LARKIN DUNTON
WARREN E. EATON
JOHN TETLOW

EDWARD SOUTHWORTH
MOSES MERRILL
F. BENTLEY YOUNG

observed at these exercises — “the passing of the keys.”

The contractor produced them — he probably got them from the janitor — and handed them to the architect. Usually the contractor did not say much; he was a doer and not a talker. The architect was usually mercifully brief and passed the keys on to the mayor, if an attempt to inveigle the mayor into attendance had been successful. The mayor said what he had to say and handed the keys to the chairman of the Committee. The chairman of the Committee handed the keys along with appropriate remarks to the chairman of the committee in charge of the construction of the building. This chairman said his say and the keys traveled on to the chairman of the committee in charge of the school. That chairman gave voice to his views on the subject and handed the keys to the principal of the school who, in a voice shaken with emotion, declared them to be a sacred trust, and, after the exercises, handed them back to the janitor.

Such exercises in more recent years have been briefer, more appropriate and more distinguished by good taste.

* * *

Almost all Boston public schools are named after some individual who is deemed worthy of such an honor. Doubtless this policy has an educational and moral influence upon pupils of

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no little importance. A school graduate takes more pride in saying that he was graduated from the Old Brimmer, the George Washington, the Abraham Lincoln, or some other school, — and this applies especially to those who were graduated from many of the older schools, — than he would in saying that he was graduated from Public School No. 123.

At the dedicatory exercises of a certain school which had been named in honor of a man who had held an exalted position in the community, who in life had been honored, admired, and respected, and whose widow attended these exercises, the principal began his address in this felicitous way: “—— was not a great, but a good man.” A slight feeling of embarrassment pervaded the audience.

* * *

Speaking of school-houses: Once there was one built in a suburb. When it was supposed to be completed and ready for occupancy, the customary visit of inspection was made. The building was admired, its fitness for its purpose was commented on; but unfortunately it occurred to one inquiring soul to ask, “How are you going to heat it?” The chimney had been omitted.

* * *

The plans for another school-house were brought back from Europe by a Superintendent who had made a foreign trip and who had been attracted

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by the convenience and general desirability of a particular school that he had found on his travels. It was reproduced in Boston, but, unfortunately, the architect added an American improvement. Thinking it might get on fire in the future, he installed a standpipe with valves and hose on each floor. This addition was regarded with pride. Somewhat later, although no fire occurred, it happened that some one thought of testing this apparatus so that its operation in time of stress might be assured. It did not work. The connection with the street main had been omitted.

* * *

Some masters conduct their own schools — they are captains of their own ships. Others have their schools run for them to a substantial extent. Which is the happier lot? "One stands in the forefront of battle and has to meet all attacks." The other has a more sheltered existence, and conducts himself in accordance with the views of councils of war which he occasionally holds with his teaching staff. One in the former class comes to headquarters for advice or instruction, and having received it, proceeds to carry it into effect. The other on a similar errand prefers to ascertain the views of his faculty, doubtlessly being of the opinion that "wisdom may be found in a multitude of counselors."

* * *

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The door of the office opens; a sweet and elderly face appears, a meek voice announces a name and follows it with a statement that she has taught in such a school for thirty, forty, forty-five, or even a longer period of years. She is about to retire. Will she get a pension?

"Most assuredly," and she is told the amount.

A question is ventured.

"Are you all right financially? Can you get along?"

"Oh, yes, I have been very prudent for many years."

A burst of confidence.

"You don't know how many things I have done without."

You do know and you regard her with a sympathetic eye, but she is cheerful, and asks that the committee be informed how much she appreciates the kindness with which it has treated her during her long term of service.

Bless her heart! The Supreme Court at Washington may have some vague and unimportant functions, but real authority and power center in the School Committee. The word of the School Committee is the law and the prophets. It is final and accepted as such.

* * *

Another comes in. You know at once that she is or has been a teacher. There is no doubt on

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that point. She talks a little of this and that. Finally she comes to the point.

"Will my pension stop if I get married?"

"Oh, no, provided you observe one requirement."

"What is that?" anxiously.

"You are entitled to only one husband at a time."

She laughs and tells something of a long delayed union on account of family objections, which have now been removed.

* * *

But who is this brisk and bright young creature who follows her, well-dressed, debonair, and distinctly "good to look at?" A high school pupil? A little too old; probably in the Normal School.

Oh, no! A teacher regularly appointed, effective, alert, progressive, one of the "comers."

Is she better or worse than her older sister? Who can tell? She is different.

* * *

A dear old soul, fondly remembered as "Biddy," was a joy to her class. Whenever her pupils found the burden and heat of the day a little too much for them, "Biddy" was always ready to oblige with her celebrated rendition of "The Little Red Hen." How many, many times during her long years of service must she have recited this poem. Each year she was assured of a new and appreciative audience.

* * *

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Some years ago a dear old lady was employed as a teacher in one of the schools. She had given long and faithful service. She was well beloved by her pupils and by her associates. But, unfortunately, in her later years she fell a victim to that strange and rare disease — the sleeping sickness. She passed most of the afternoon sessions in peaceful slumber, and her class consequently failed to progress as rapidly as it should. She was shielded and protected and it was some time before the situation came under the eye of authority. It was brought to official light by a parent whose complaint or criticism was, of course, justifiable. Nothing remained but gently to urge a retirement on pension, for the welfare of the pupil must ever be the first consideration in a school system.

* * *

In another school there was a teacher whose inefficiency was pretty well understood by the educational authorities. A movement was begun to secure her retirement. She had many friends who rallied to her support, and who were indignant that such action should be taken. According to their stories she was alert, capable, and efficient. It was discovered, however, that most of her support came from persons in the vicinity of another school. A suggestion was therefore made that if, in their opinion, this teacher's services were so

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valuable, a transfer might be arranged and she become the teacher of their children, and the Committee might possibly be willing to consider placing additional duties and responsibilities upon her. The petitioners hastily withdrew their support.

* * *

In still another school there was a teacher of markedly aggressive characteristics. He was a "rule or ruin" man. He was like the character in "A Trip to Venus," whose first words on arriving on that planet were: "Is there a government here? If so, I'm agin it." The school was almost disrupted. The head master, being employed as a teacher rather than as a policeman, was scarcely able to maintain peace. He wrote a letter in which he described his difficulties and the faults of his subordinate. He even went so far as to throw a cloud upon his mental soundness.

His confidence was betrayed. The teacher became acquainted with the contents of the letter. He promptly filed an amazing mass of endorsements and testimonials from persons of his acquaintance of the highest standing. He also engaged counsel and threatened suit for defamation of character.

The poor principal was scared blue. He wrote another letter in which he entirely revised his former opinion. He described the teacher as a

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tower of strength, a staff to lean upon, a prop to his old age, a lamb in disposition. As to his intellect, Horace Mann and Daniel Webster combined were not in the same class.

The suit was not pressed. The "amende honorable" had been made.

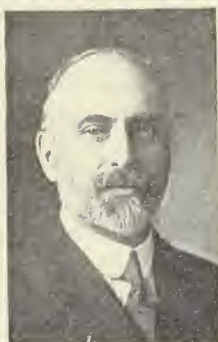
Whenever this teacher called at Mason Street, he was received with great courtesy. No one took any chances.

* * *

The knowledge, the talent, the versatility in a large teaching force is something astonishing. There are chemists, philosophers, mathematicians, historians, musicians, men skilled in the arts and crafts, artists, perhaps sculptors, linguists. There is among them one of extraordinary acquaintance with foreign languages, including even Sanskrit. There is no need to send outside the service for the translation of a foreign letter.

There is another who is now engaged in the preparation of some kind of a key to Chinese, which he thinks will be invaluable to students interested in that language. Perhaps it will aid in the reading of a laundryman's checks; who knows? He occupies some of his leisure in the realms of the higher mathematics, in a strange and rare atmosphere where respiration for the ordinary mortal is impossible.

It would indeed be a strange and unusual prob-



TILSON A. MEAD
ALONZO MESERVE
GEORGE C. MANN

ROBERT E. BABSON
GRANVILLE S. WEBSTER
CHARLES W. PARMENTER

EDWARD W. SCHUERCH
JOHN O. NORRIS
LEWIS H. DUTTON

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lem that could not be solved by some member of the teaching force.

* * *

Some of the meetings of former School Committees were rather stormy. On one occasion one of the members professed himself as apprehensive that serious trouble might occur at a meeting. He invited a school officer to provide adequate police protection. The officer demurred; he could not find any authority conferred upon him in this direction by the rules and regulations. It was not his business to furnish police protection. The meeting was held, there was a large audience. It passed off peacefully enough, but over the heads of the audience in the corridor could be seen the helmet of a protector of the peace. Evidently the member played safe.

* * *

At another meeting a trifling incident occurred that was the cause of much amusement to all the members of the Board, except one. He introduced an order or motion and promptly proceeded to vote against it. What his motive was no one could discover.

* * *

When the reorganized Board came into control in 1906, the members were much concerned about its finances. At one meeting they had in attendance the auditing clerk, and consulted him

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as an expert. The chairman inquired whether the appropriation was sufficient to carry the Committee through the year without a deficit.

The auditing clerk replied somewhat as follows:—

“Do you mean if you don’t take on any more things; if you don’t undertake any more expansions; if you don’t open any more schools?”

“Yes, yes,” said the chairman, “just that.”

The auditing clerk ended on a triumphant note.

“You’ll come out \$30,000 in the hole.”

The Committee hastily got out the pruning knife.

* * *

From time to time successive Committees have had occasion to make application to the Legislature for power to make additional appropriations to meet the constantly increasing cost of the school system. Sometimes they have had the sanction and support of the mayor, which is usually important. Sometimes they have been obliged to play a lone hand. Usually they have been able to present a sufficiently good case to justify favorable action, and have got it. Sometimes they have failed.

On one occasion they met with an unexpected success. The bill which the Committee had introduced in the Legislature was very likely to be defeated in the House. It would probably pass

the Senate. The mayor was opposed and had instructed his Legislative agent to prevent the passage of the bill. The Committee was very doubtful of success and deputed one of its employees at the last moment to see if anything could be done. The emissary of the Committee sought the representative of the mayor, and was definitely informed that the opposition would be pressed. He asked that further representations on the subject be made to the mayor with a view to getting him into a more favorable frame of mind. The Committee's representative then hastened to the State House and found that the bill was in line for final action in the House. He was successful in arranging that it should be brought up before the noon-day recess. A temporary speaker presided. Just as the members were beginning to leave the chamber, the bill reached the speaker's hands. He evidently did not regard it as of much importance, for he proceeded immediately to put it to a vote. Half the members were in the aisles on their way to the doors. The vote was taken; the gavel fell, the bill had passed, and the House had recessed.

A search was then made for the bill. It was found like a lost child reposing in solitary state on the desk in the speaker's room. The Committee's agent hesitated. Would he be safe in taking the bill, hastening to the home of the speaker, who

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was there confined by illness, securing his signature and returning the bill? He decided that the risk was too great to take, and sought the sergeant-at-arms. That official declined to allow the Committee's agent to take the bill, but agreed to send it out by one of his own myrmidons to the speaker's house for signature, and before the Senate convened at 3 o'clock the bill, duly signed, was before that body. The Committee's agent obtained the ear of the chairman of the Senate while the Senate was in session and made brief and urgent representations as to the needs of the Committee for financial relief. The chairman was sympathetic. He agreed to put the bill upon its passage. He did so at the first opportunity, which soon occurred. The attention of the Senate appeared to be engaged on other matters, the bill passed, and the same day it was signed by the governor. The Committee's agent, surprised at this stroke of good fortune, hastened to report the result and called it a day.

* * *

The teaching force is very keen on the salary question. When an opportunity is deemed to be ripe for an application in that direction, it sometimes happens that the first move is made in favor of the teachers of a particular rank, or of a few ranks, rather than for a general increase. In such campaigns other teachers stand on the side

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lines and lend their moral support, but are not especially active, except under the surface. The application in favor of the few prevails. Their salaries are increased. A year goes by; and then the advance of the previous year for one or more groups is used as an argument in favor of other groups, in order that equalization may be secured. This course is especially useful when small groups of teachers are concerned.

* * *

There was once a paymaster employed in the city treasurer's office whose duty it was to pay teachers in certain schools. By some inadvertence he paid a teacher, or one he supposed to be a teacher, when he should not have done so. Either her appointment had not been formally made, or she had not been what was then called "confirmed."

The attention of the paymaster was called to his error.

"Oh," he said easily, "I'll get that fixed all right!"

The teacher was appointed or confirmed at the next meeting of the Committee.

* * *

The teachers and members of the supervising staff are enjoined to become familiar with the rules and regulations established for their guidance, and faithfully to observe them. They

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doubtless try to do so, with a few and trifling exceptions, but they are not always familiar with the regulations, and sometimes ask curious questions. For example, after a teacher has served successfully and has been annually reappointed for four successive years, she becomes eligible for appointment on tenure; that is to say, continued employment is secure during good behavior and efficiency, or until the age limit is reached. Teachers elected on tenure are notified of such action as a matter of course, and some of them are so disturbed that they anxiously inquire what they have done to merit such treatment. They assume that appointment on tenure is some disciplinary measure.

* * *

Every few years the subject of corporal punishment comes up in the Committee, though not so frequently as formerly, for consideration, and the suggestion is made that it be abolished. This method of discipline though often attacked has survived, but is regarded with increasing disapproval. There are certain schools in which it used to be more in favor than in others, and in one school it was a subject of curious inquiry whether any pupil completed the entire course without at least one opportunity to lead him to entertain a scornful opinion of the wisdom of King Solomon. A chairman of the Committee,

a former graduate of this school, was once asked if he alone escaped this painful experience. He did not answer!

One of these periodic investigations of the subject was made by the Committee some years ago, and the results tabulated. In the particular school referred to the number of cases reported was surprisingly low. Inquiry was made. It appeared that by some construction of the then existing regulation on the subject, which required the reporting of cases of corporal punishment, the total number of punishments inflicted both by the principal and by his teachers was not required, and the result was only a partial report. The surprised Committee made a hasty revision of the regulation.

In the course of the same investigation particular attention was directed to another school having only boys in attendance. The common belief was that the cases of corporal punishment in this school would put it high up on the list. On the contrary, no cases at all were reported. Here was a mystery indeed. How was discipline secured without the aid of this measure. The discipline was reported as being all right. Well, what was the explanation? The master was invited to appear before the Committee, and he explained that he was not a believer in corporal punishment, found it unnecessary, and did not use it. The Committee was charmed. Here indeed was a

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“Daniel come to judgment.” He was invited to address his fellow masters and endeavor to exalt them to the high plane on which he pursued his course. He did so with some manifest hesitation. Later it was discovered that while he did not rattan his pupils, he shook ’em.

* * *

Another master came to grief with the regulation bearing on corporal punishment. It prescribed that this punishment shall be confined to the hands of the offender. The master in question inadvertently in one instance substituted legs. An aggrieved parent complained, the Superintendent sat in judgment, and the erring master was fined for his mistake in anatomy.

* * *

Another master fell, not into disgrace, but became the object of serious criticism which he, of course, regarded as unjust and unwarranted. The Committee felt that he should be disciplined. After a good deal of consideration, they came to the conclusion that his school would be benefited by transferring him to another school. Final action to this effect was about to be taken when some one inquired “If he is such a failure where he is, what benefit will the school to which he is to be transferred derive?” The logic was inevitable. He remained where he was.

* * *

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With many masters and teachers a high average attendance of pupils is much to be desired, and absence is frowned upon. A certain master in one of his reports of attendance to headquarters beat all previous records for the period covered. He reported an average attendance of 103 per cent.

* * *

Among the duties of an office boy once employed by the School Committee was the sending out of its reports and documents. This particular boy becoming convinced that such reports did not receive the attention their importance demanded undertook to stimulate public interest in them in a highly original manner.

He conducted as a side issue a mail order business on his own account, and with a set of school reports included some slips setting forth that a remittance of ten cents would be responded to by a collection of "Racy Picture Cards, Snappy Stories and a Joke Book Appropriate to All Festive Occasions".

For once, at least, school reports found themselves in strange company, and although the response to this advertisement was somewhat limited it was quite sufficient to receive all the attention its importance demanded.

CHAPTER XXX

QUO VADIS

A FORMER mayor is reported to have once said: "I don't know where I'm going, but I'm on my way." The public schools are also on their way, but unlike that mayor they always know exactly where they are going; they always have a definite purpose in view and having accomplished that purpose press on to tread wider fields of usefulness. The signals from the bridge are always "ahead;" sometimes "full speed;" sometimes "half speed;" sometimes "dead slow;" never "astern." If they ever depart from their true course they get back to it as soon as possible, and usually before they are found out.

While the public schools do not favor any particular form of religion, they have a faithful reliance on Divine Providence; they believe that the Great Architect of the Universe has built their path; that He guides their helm; that while His hand is on the throttle and adjusts the spark the school train can never run off the tracks.¹

¹ Republication of this metaphor forbidden except with author's permission.

CHAPTER XXXI

WHAT DO THE SCHOOLS MOST NEED

NOT better teachers, because the quality of the teaching service is probably steadily improving and will continue to improve. Not more money, because the supply has been adequate, even generous, in the past and this may be expected in the future. Not more emphasis upon patriotism, because not only is sufficient attention paid to this virtue already, but it is evident, especially during the past few years, that patriotism is fundamental and unchanging among the great people of whom we form a part. Not the teaching of religion, because there are too many differences of opinion to permit instruction in this subject acceptable to all; besides there is probably more than one road that leads to Heaven, and the particular religion we profess is generally due to a mere accident of birth.

The greatest need is a spiritual development of the school system; a greater appreciation of truth. There is a truth that is material and a truth that is spiritual, and the latter is of the far greater importance. The schools should exercise a steady

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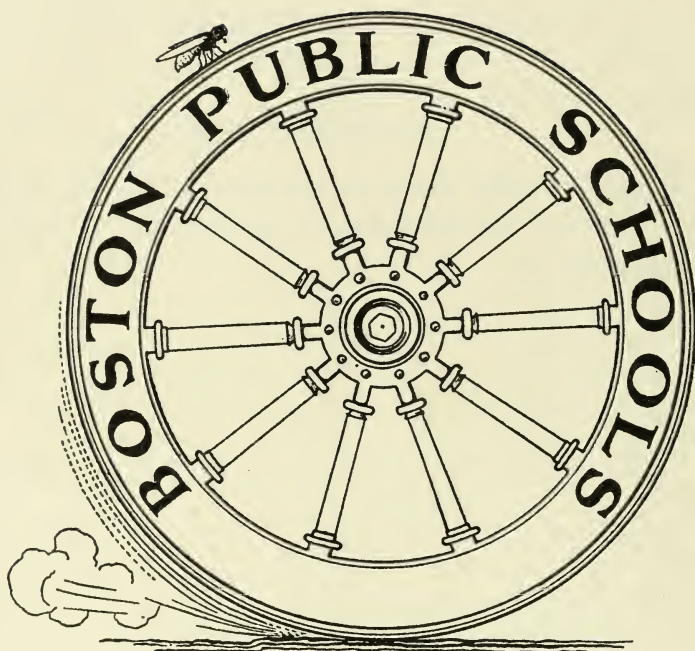
and increasing influence to promote a larger appreciation of the rights of our neighbors, to the forgetting of any gospel of hate, and the substituting of a gospel of love. To this end there are two points of beginning, — the home and the school. The schools should not fail nor evade their responsibilities.

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CHAPTER XXXII

POSTSCRIPTUM

IF any reader cares to examine a likeness of the author his attention is invited to the following page.



Thus charged with all the commonweal,
This single fly began to feel
Responsibility too great,
And thought the while — he knew 'twas so —
He made the team and carriage go.

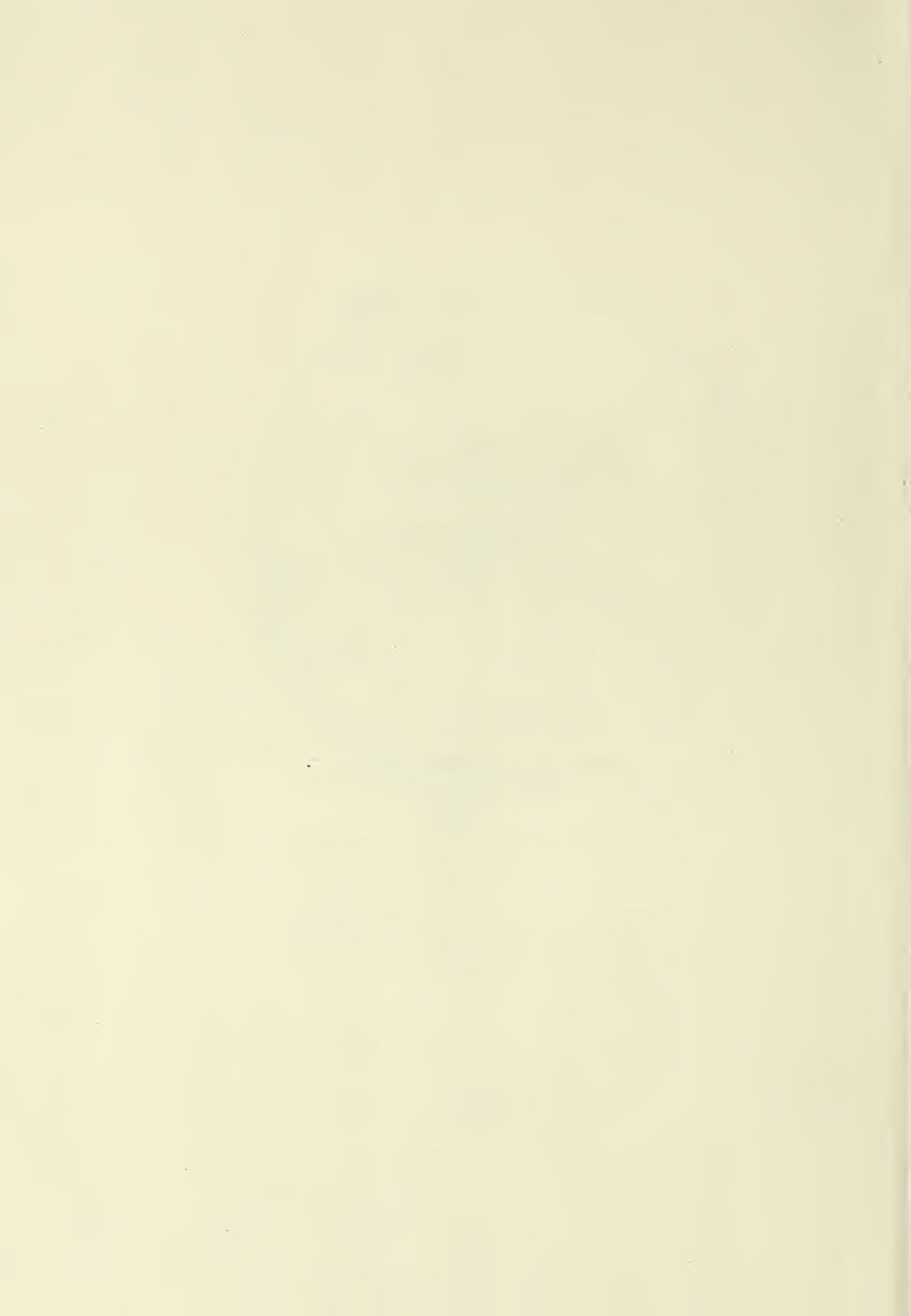
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